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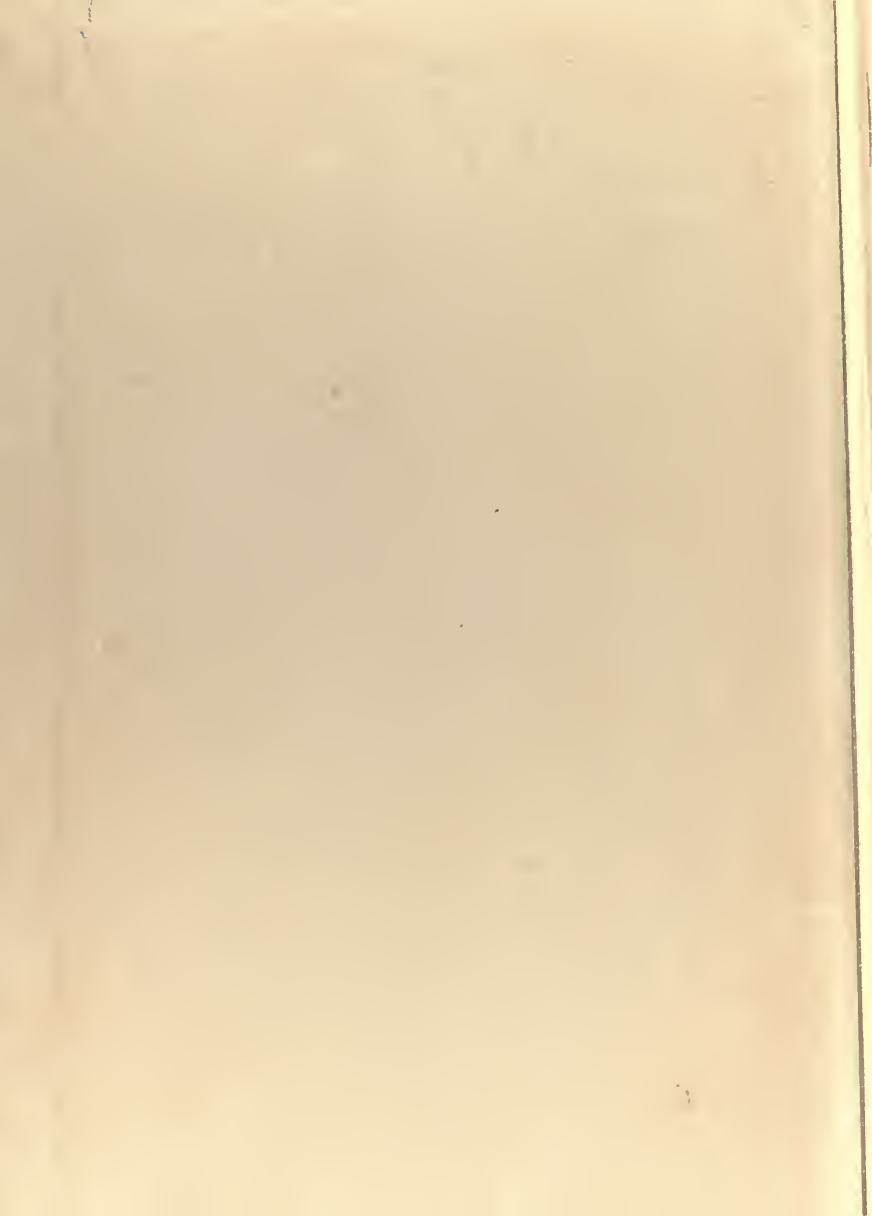
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JANET
WARD BY
MARGARET E. SANGSTER



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For Josephine - 1902 -

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Janet Ward

*A Daughter
of the Manse*

By

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

Author of

"Winsome Womanhood"

"Lyrics of Love" &c., &c.



New York Chicago Toronto
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London & Edinburgh

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(*September*)

To My Friend

JANE E. MEEKER

2132523

FOREWORD

IN Janet Ward I have tried to tell the story of a girl of to-day. Conditions change, but girlhood remains essentially the same in the passing years. Girls confront life, and life wears the aspect of the sphynx. What shall it offer them, what gifts bestow, what good shall they do? Girls are restless, they long for careers, they are caught in the whirl of the period. They acknowledge the claim that society in the realm of poverty, as in that of wealth, has upon them, every one. In the end, with my Janet, those are the happiest who find their career ending in a good man's love, and their world bounded by the four walls of home.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.



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Janet Ward

I

JANET STARTS OUT FOR HERSELF

"I WOULD put my work aside now if I were you, daughter."

"Oh, mother dear, please let me finish this bit of hemstitching. The light is so fine to-day. It was only in winter when the clouds hung low, that the light was trying. My eyes are very strong."

"I don't like to see you so absorbed, Janet. Whatever you do takes too much out of you, with your hammer and tongs attention. Even a piece of embroidery uses up every bit of your vitality. It isn't wise, dear."

"I'll be done soon, mother, just a few stitches more remain to finish this."

Silence fell between the two, the young girl bending over a task of dainty lingerie, the faded little woman, whose book lay neglected upon her lap. Janet's needle went out and in.

"She is growing more like her father every day," the mother thought, with a wistful look at the brown head, smoothly braided, and the firm set girlish mouth. Mrs. Ward was tired, discouraged, and

somewhat blue, but she fought her fiend of depression bravely. What use would it be to let Janet or even her husband, tramping in his study, to and fro, know that she felt melancholy? It would only distress them and they could not help her. Nobody could, in her darkest hours. She did not think God could, but fortunately these black hours came seldom. Generally Mrs. Ward was able to stand outside her discouragement, and view it as it was, the result of overwork and anxiety, but not always. She made a resolute battle with it, prayed against it, and often came off victorious. The instinct to hide her melancholy was born of most unselfish love for those whom the sight of it saddened.

"I am glad Janet is her father's child," she thought, and then before there was time for any more thought or speech, down came the minister from his study, a dingy den above stairs. It was really the coziest and most popular room in the house, the true household room, though the minister wrote and read and studied there. He was one of the rare students whose concentration is so perfect that they are never interrupted by what is going on around them. A man who cannot compass the luxury of solitude, learns to be indifferent to its charms, and David Ward's life had never been very much apart from that of his family.

The family was large and the house was small, and there was always, when he needed to be alone, the wide outdoors, the field, the lane, the God's acre behind the little church. As for the study, the boys loved and shared it when they were in the house, reading over and over the few books they found en-

tertaining, veritable oases in an arid desert of concordances and commentaries, which loomed large and dark on the home-made pine shelves.

Mrs. Ward wrote her letters on a corner of the minister's table, a habit begun when she was a bride and he used to say that the sermon came sooner, like butter from the churn, if he could now and then look up and catch the gleam of her brown eyes, or see the sun glinting on her golden hair. She continued to sit there, now that the golden tints in her hair were fading, and the delicate bloom had gone from her cheek, and the minister still thought her very beautiful. But I don't know that her presence helped the sermon much. Five hungry lads, growing out of their jackets and shoes faster than a scanty purse can replace them, an ambitious young daughter to educate, the sense of reaching middle age with no prospect of an advance in position, are so many separate handicaps in a race where time has the advantage, and a suspicion of failure is paralyzing. Mrs. Ward zealously believed in her husband, and longed that others might do so, but here he was, at fifty, with no city parish beckoning, working among the same plain folk who had called him when he left the seminary. Sometimes she shuddered in terror of that spectre which haunts so many ministers' wives, the dread that her husband shall fail to please the young people; those critical auditors whom the minister has, maybe, known from their babyhood. Sighs, though suppressed, do not help sermons, and Mr. Ward wrote more easily when his wife was out of the room. Happily for himself he was an optimist, the least exacting and the most sympathetic

of men. Lovable, loving, impulsive, pinning his faith to the possibilities of to-morrow, forever certain that something very bright was waiting just around the turn of the road, he was a charming friend, a faithful pastor, and sanguine yet, though no farther along in the path of what men of the world call success, than he had been at twenty-three.

He came into the room with a rush as usual, waving some closely written sheets of paper over his head. Janet glanced at his excited face, smiling a welcome.

"Here you are, my dearest, and Janet too! I want to try my essay on you. It's my turn to read at the Omega, next Saturday evening, and I've been pegging away at this for the last two days. I think, myself, it's pretty decent: a study of Petrarch; at least it will be a change from the polemics that some of the fellows are so fond of. Now, Janet, put away that sewing and give me your attention, please. If any criticism occurs to either of you, let me hear it very frankly."

He plunged in *medias res*, reading as he did everything else, with headlong speed and dash, whirling forward in his theme, with boyish delight. Mrs. Ward listened, caring nothing for the old Italian poet who bored her excessively, but seeing as she always did, the eager brightness of her comrade on the road who would never grow old, either in his own personality, or to her. Janet, like both parents in some features of her nature, gave the paper a divided interest. She knew it was fine and scholarly. She also knew that the Omegas were not famishing for a purely literary paper and she did wish her father had

chosen to write something more seasonable and timely in topic. They never appreciated the by-ways of thought and literary research, which to Mr. Ward were always so alluring.

"Why couldn't he have been a professor in some great college?" thought the daughter, following the rhythmic voice, watching the kindling eye. "A country parish is the last place for my father."

He was reaching the final period, breathless, and animated, when a shadow darkened the doorway. Entering without more ceremony than the briefest, most perfunctory knock, the newcomer brusquely addressed the head of the house.

"I say, dominie, do you know that Mr. Warren is very sick? The family feel hurt that you haven't been in to ask for him since Monday, and they are too important to be affronted."

Mr. Ward's sensitive countenance was shadowed at the intrusion, and the peremptory tone. "Thank you, Mr. Leland," he said, "you are very good. Mr. Warren is not well enough to see a visitor and the family are too busy to be interrupted. I usually know who is ill in the congregation."

"And I've been there twice since Monday," added Janet positively, with a little challenging inflection in her girlish voice.

"You are nothing but a young woman, hardly that, yet," said the visitor, bringing his gaze to bear on Janet, from under bushy brows. "Not one who can take the place of a minister of the gospel at a sick bed, let alone one's own pastor."

"I'll step right over now," interjected Mr. Ward hastily, folding the little packet of paper up, and

slipping it into his breast pocket. For the moment the glamour had vanished from Petrarch. He hurried on hat and coat, and was gone in an instant.

"That's him, for all the world," ejaculated the visitor, ponderously, "just touch and go. He can't see Brother Warren to-day and he'll tell Mrs. Warren I sent him. Why in the living earth couldn't he a-waited and talked things over?"

"Father tries to do his duty," answered Janet, again with the little defiant ring in her voice. Mr. Leland always rubbed her the wrong way. And he was so often, as now, inopportune.

"Nobody said he didn't, Janet," replied the thorn in the minister's side, for this was the self-constituted office of Reuben Leland, in the parish. "But he does spend too much time over his books and his sermons, and not enough over *us*; he isn't around enough in the homes of his people, that's why I, who am his friend, come and stir him up. I don't talk behind his back. I know our people. They like a man who drops in sociably and stays to supper, and hobnobs more with the young folks than our minister does. First thing we know the new church at the centre will be getting our people away. I'm friendly to Dominie Ward, so I come and tell him to his face, what others whisper when his back is turned. I'm a plain-spoken, rough and ready man, Mrs. Ward, you ought to know me by this time. He'd ought to play golf and baseball, you tell him I say so."

"I am sure we have no more sincere well-wisher in the congregation than you, Mr. Leland," said Mrs. Ward, with the ready tact of a minister's wife, at the same time motioning Janet to be silent with an al-

most imperceptible nod. Mrs. Ward's blues took flight when she must conciliate some one for David's sake.

Janet bit her lips, and took up her needlework again. After a few moments more of conversation mostly one-sided, the caller took himself heavily off, and the young girl, as he departed down the road, shook her fist at his retreating figure.

Her mother said, "Don't do that, dear. There are worse men than Mr. Leland. He's dull, but honest."

"Few more disagreeable ones, mother: he's a regular Mr. Pumblechook. I wish father could have a chance somewhere else."

"So do I, but nothing looms up on the horizon just now, daughter, and I think we should not be wishing for it. The people here are very kind and love their church."

"But they don't pay the salary promptly, and the salary is so small anyway. Never mind, one of these days when I've finished college, and the boys are old enough to help along, times will be better in this manse. I hope none of my brothers will enter the ministry."

"I'd like one of my sons to stand in his father's place, and preach the word," said the mother. "I'm often more disheartened than you dream, my dear, often I can't see an inch ahead, and I have very little faith, I'm not naturally buoyant, as your father is, but I do pray that I may have a man to stand before the Lord, from my bunch of bonny boys."

"You are a good woman, mother." Janet jumped up impulsively and kissed her. "I'll never be half so good if I live to be a hundred. There, sweetness,

don't cry," and she kissed her again. "I'll slip away, meet my father, and make one or two little visits with him, before supper. There's time enough," she said. "And coming back, we'll bring the mail. If only I can get that school at Dene's Mills this summer, it'll help clothe me for college, and having the scholarship will make everything beautifully smooth."

"It's going to be lonesome here without you, Janet. I wish it were as it used to be, that a girl could receive her education at home, and not have to go away. Four years is such a long stretch in a girl's life."

"Nobody can be properly prepared for a position of influence in these days, without a more elaborate education than used to be necessary," said Janet. "And one must have a diploma. But don't borrow trouble, little mother. It's only one day at a time, after all. I'm off." She ran down the garden walk whistling a merry stave, like a boy or a bird.

Her mother was doubtful about that whistling of Janet's. She could imitate robin or thrush so perfectly that if you were in another room, you looked about for the hidden warbler, but Mrs. Ward hardly approved of the accomplishment in a girl. Still, Janet's cheer was so overflowing in its sunny gladness that she could not ask her to stop; the low mood crept over her with an insistent depth and chill, as she fancied home lacking Janet's songs and roulades, her trilling whistle, her fingers on the piano, her quick impulsive energy all over the manse. Mothers have more to sacrifice than girls dream, when they send their daughters away. The college class-room is the unseen battle-ground where some

mothers as well as many daughters fight a good fight and win the victory.

Springdale was putting on its May time cloth of gold and sheen of blossoms, when Janet left it, for the first time in her life all alone, to begin her struggle for a foothold. A certain rich Aunt Katherine in the background of the manse, had often supplemented the deficiencies of the minister's purse, but she was at present, lingering abroad, and as Janet grew older, she did not feel quite so happy as she once did, wearing the frocks which were made over for her from Aunt Katherine's discarded gowns.

"Her heart is set on earning for herself, dearest," said the minister. "Why not let her try?"

"Aunt Kate would disapprove of the step, I am sure."

"Aunt Kate is in Europe."

"Janet will be among strangers."

"Among kindly strangers. It will be a good preparation for her absence next year, this four months of district school teaching. And she'll have a Sabbath with us, now and then, bless the child. I shall miss her terribly too, but she's right to go."

When the train puffed away from the station, and the girl seated by the window, saw father, mother, and brothers on the platform, with a dozen or more of her friends, all waving her good-bye, she felt like a very little girl indeed. Eighteen often bears, on its young shoulders, the weight of forty-five, and forty-five will tell you that it feels as young as eighteen. Janet pulled her veil over her face. She did not wish the conductor or any fellow-passenger to suspect that she was almost in tears, so she swal-

lowed very hard, and set her teeth, and she was fully ten miles from Springdale, before she began to look around her with curiosity and interest. The train carried her on for three hours, winding round curves, crossing rivers, climbing mountains, till at last her station was reached. When she stepped out on the lonely landing at Dene's Mills, and her trunk was deposited beside her, she was startled to find herself solitary in an unfamiliar world, without a house or a person in sight. The waiting room was locked, the agent having gone home to dinner. On every side the great mountains lifted strong ramparts, timbered to their tops; a road lost itself among the hills, but no village was visible.

Janet opened her satchel, and read for the twentieth time, the letter which had been to her the chart for her journey: "Leave the train at Fells Junction. Some one will meet you." This was Fells Junction.

"There is nothing to do but to wait," she said, sitting down on the bench that stood before the closed door. As she seated herself in the absolute stillness of noonday, alone in a country place, to which Springdale with its thriving village life, seemed by contrast a city, she began to wonder what she should do, if she had made a mistake in the day or the train, or if, as she fancied, the people to whom she was going, had forgotten all about her existence.

Even as she speculated on this alarming possibility, her ear caught the sound of hoof beats, and presently a girl, no older than herself, driving a pony, and seated in a trim little runabout, came hurriedly up, and sprang out, full of apologies.

"Miss Ward, I am sure. I am Elizabeth Evans. I

beg pardon for keeping you waiting, but I was not quite soon enough about starting. Are you very tired, Miss Ward? I think we'll send over for your trunk this afternoon. It will be safe here. Nobody ever molests luggage and there isn't a cloud in the sky. Wouldn't you like a little drive, to view the landscape o'er, before we go home?"

"If you don't mind," said Janet, "I'd like, Miss Evans, to stop and see Mrs. Hardwick, who is, I believe, to be my hostess. The trustees wrote that the teacher boarded with Mrs. Hardwick."

"That is usually the case," said Miss Evans, "but it isn't to be so with you. When my father discovered that you were the daughter of his old classmate, David Ward, he at once arranged that you should come to us, and, really, I'm sure it will be more comfortable for you. We have a big house and quantities of room. We will make you one of ourselves, and as I, too, am going to Lucas College next autumn, we'll have all summer to get well acquainted. Nothing could be nicer."

Janet had never had so complete a surprise. She thought of the text that she had read that morning in her calendar.

"The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places and I have a goodly heritage." Truly it was being realized to her in this cordial meeting with a girl who started in at once on lines of friendliness.

"Your father must have been Horace Evans!" Janet said. "I have heard about most of my dear dad's chums and classmates. He has an album full of their photographs, and we children have known most of the men by name ever since we first looked

at pictures. There's very little going on at Springdale except the congregation, so we are very intimate at the manse, more so than most families, I fancy."

"Well," said Elizabeth, "I've never been intimate with my father, I wish I were. He's a very busy man, here and there, and everywhere, and wrapped up in making money, but he has odd moments of sentiment, and when he heard about you, one of them flashed up. 'Dave Ward's daughter,' he said, 'shall not eat hardtack at Mary Hardwick's. I wish she could find a better job than teaching the factory kids, but I haven't any myself, and we're in luck to get her for them.' So it is settled, Miss Ward, that you are to be our guest."

Janet felt a slight hesitation; she knew that in this first flight from the nest, she had meant to be independent, yet it seemed ungracious to refuse the invitation that had dropped on her from the sky. Elizabeth was turning in at the lodge-gate and bowling presently over a wide well-kept avenue between park-like sweeps of velvet turf and great trees that cast broad shadows under arching boughs.

"I would have written myself and invited you, Miss Ward, but father said no, I'd better not; maybe you wouldn't understand the situation, so I took his advice, and so here we are."

Late that afternoon, when Janet's trunk was unpacked, her modest outfit put away in the closet and bureau, and the trunk itself carried away to some invisible attic, she looked around her in a little uneasiness of mind. In the simple economy of the manse there had been no such luxury as she saw around her here; her chamber with its outlook to

the sunrise was spacious and beautifully furnished; a bath-room with every equipment was connected with it *en suite* for her personal use, and on the dressing-table were articles of shining silver, fit for the handling of a princess.

"I have come to the mountains to teach a district school in the coal country," she said to herself, "and I am entertained in the home of a millionaire, with everything that wealth can buy. It surely isn't right for me to stay, yet how am I to go? Mother would love to see this house, and these people, who are so kind and unostentatious. How pretty she would be, dressed as Mrs. Evans is, in soft rich black silk with beautiful lace and jewels at her neck, and rings on her hands; dear mother's hands that have had so much work to do, and never have had any rings but two, her wedding and engagement rings. Well," she went on, silently communing with her own heart, "I must at least stay a little while, but probably they'll soon discover that a working-bee is out of place here, and be glad to let me go."

Janet took her Bible from the stand where she had laid it, and sat down to read her chapter. In all her life, since she had been old enough to read, she could remember no night when she had omitted reading her portion of the scriptures before retiring. She was in her night-dress, her hair loose: she looked very young and very fair, but it was not of herself she was thinking as she turned to the place in the book, which was her regular lesson in course. Her mind was at home; she knew that the boys had gone to bed; father and mother were in the study; the house was desolate to them without their Janet. Her

own room door would be shut, for mother could not bear to look in at its emptiness; that bare bit of a room, with white bed, white bureau, white rocker, blue denim carpet, white curtains tied with blue ribbons, was a very sweet place to her as she sat in the statelier one, with its more elegant appointments. But she had set her hand to the plow and she would not turn back. She found the chapter and began to read, slowly, and audibly, but in very low tones, as her custom was:

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

There was a tap at her door, and in response to her answer, it opened and Elizabeth came in. She was in a loose pink kimono and slippers, her long golden hair fell around her like a cloak. When she saw what Janet was doing, she stopped on the threshold.

"Oh, do you read your *Bible* before you go to bed?"

"Yes," said Janet simply.

"Then you want to be alone. Anyway, you must be tired, so I'll just say good-night. But it is funny you read it *every* night. I suppose it's because your father is a minister."

"No," said Janet. "It's because I like to know what my Heavenly Father has to tell me. Don't you read yours?"

"Sometimes, on Sundays," said Elizabeth. "Good-night. We have breakfast at eight. Sleep well."

STARTS OUT FOR HERSELF 25

Beside Janet's bureau, in a little silver frame, hung this verse, by Ellen M. Gates:

"Sleep well within this quiet room
O thou ! whoe'er thou art ;
And let no mournful yesterday
Disturb thy peaceful heart,
Nor let to-morrow scare thy rest,
With dreams of coming ill ;
Thy Maker is thy changeless friend,
His love surrounds thee still.
Forget thyself and all the world,
Put out each feverish light,
The stars are shining overhead,
Sleep sweet—good-night—good-night."

"If that girl," said Elizabeth to herself in her chamber across the hall, "is going to turn out a little Puritan, I shall be sorry she came here. Deliver me from a girl who is too religious. She is such a nice looking girl, I hope she'll prove congenial. Probably though, she has been brought up to think nearly everything that is amusing, sinful, and so she'll be shocked dreadfully at the ways of some of my friends. Well, time will show." Elizabeth would wait.

Meanwhile Janet having said her evening prayer with a greater earnestness than usual, was fast asleep in her strange quarters, after a day of new experiences. She was too tired to dream, but I think the angels watched her pillow through the night.

II

NANCY WIBURN

THE little red schoolhouse was a mile away from Mr. Evans' house, and Janet preferred walking to and fro, to driving in Elizabeth's carriage. Mr. Evans, watching her keenly in the first few days, decided that Dave Ward's daughter was a plucky and persevering young woman, and that she meant to earn her salary. As a business man, he prized business ways; and by many little attentions showed that Janet was high in his favor. For one thing, she fitted at once into the household, was never late at a meal, never interrupted one's talk or reading, and had the excellent art of effacing herself frequently, so that she was not an intrusion on the family life. Gentle Mrs. Evans liked her too, and soon made her feel entirely at home. The first embarrassment in Janet's mind arose on the first Sabbath she passed at The Cedars, when the morning broke darkly through enfolding mists and heavy clouds, and rain began to fall before church-time, a heavy soaking rain with chill winds.

Breakfast was late. Janet came down dressed for service, to find Elizabeth the only occupant of the dining-room.

"Mother had coffee in her room," she said, "and father breakfasted alone, an hour ago and is now in the library writing letters. He takes Sunday morning

for that recreation; but surely dear, you are not going out in this downpour. There won't be a baker's dozen in church to-day."

"All the more reason for my going, then. I'll make one more."

"But Janet, our minister has gone to some ecclesiastical function or other, and there's a stranger to preach, a very tiresome old gentleman, I'm afraid. Let's stay at home and rest. Sunday was given us to rest in, don't you think so?"

"Elizabeth dear," both girls had left formality behind, and called one another by their Christian names, "dad always says he'd rather his people would stay at home when he's in the pulpit, than when a stranger is; a minister has a good deal of sensitiveness about vacant pews when a friend preaches for him. I have a sort of loyalty to old clergymen too; they have borne the burden and the heat of the day, and it's hard for them to see that their day is waning, and there is this about it, they have had long years to study and teach and pray, and their experience is worth something to their juniors. But forgive me for preaching. I go to church through all weathers, unless I'm ill."

"I'll order the horses then," said Elizabeth a little coldly. "As a rule, father does not have them go out on Sundays. But you can't walk through a deluge."

"I have walked through many a heavier storm, and should not ride, if the carriage were at the door. See, dear, I have on a short skirt and thick boots, so put me out of your mind directly. I know my father and mother expect me to do here just as I do when at home, and there's nothing but real illness that ever

effects our pew. I'm a minister's daughter, and have been brought up to church-going."

A little later, the bells sounded faintly through the uproar of the wind, and the dashing of the rain in sheets against the panes. Elizabeth settled herself in an easy chair with the last new novel, and was soon absorbed in its pages. Her father, glancing out of the bay window where his writing table stood, observed a sturdy girlish figure, in trim rainy day costume, tramping sturdily down the avenue. He smiled.

"Dave's daughter is consistent, I see. I wonder if she'll keep it up here. I hope so."

A yearning look stole over the tired face. Somehow that slight steadily moving figure, unmindful of the drenching tempest, recalled to him another, older and stouter, but equally energetic and equally resolute in church-going, let the weather have what vagary it might. Horace Evans had a mental picture of his mother, and the curtain of the past, parting, brought vividly back the plain home of his boyhood, the Bible on the stand, the grace at the table, and the family worship morning and night. Janet's silent grace at the unblest meals in his house was very unobtrusive, yet it had not escaped the notice of her host. Now, without intending it she was a witness-bearer. Mr. Evans put down his pen and closed the drawers of his desk. Presently he stopped at the door of the drawing-room. "Tell your mother, Elizabeth," he said, "that I've gone to church." Such a thing had not happened, wet or dry, hot or cold, on the Sabbath, in a twelvemonth. It was a genuine surprise. Father, of all people!

Elizabeth sprang hastily up.

"Wait five minutes, and I'll go too. I'll just slip into another frock."

"You know," she said, as the two walked together down the road, now muddy and soft, "that old Mr. Blauvelt is to preach to-day, don't you, father?"

"It doesn't matter to me, daughter, who may preach. I'm not going to hear a sermon. I'm going, because my mother used to, and seeing little Janet starting out so bravely, brought her suddenly to my mind. You don't remember your grandmother, Elizabeth, but she was a Christian, and didn't believe in living for one world. She lived for both. Maybe I've been making a mistake."

The service had begun when they reached the church.

Janet was not in the Evans pew. Indeed she did not know which it was. There were no ushers in the small country meeting-house, and when she stepped in, she saw, seated by herself in the end of a long pew, half way down the aisle, a girl of her own age, whose quiet, rather sad expression stirred her interest. She stood a second or two in the door, and the girl made a half beckoning motion; Janet entered, and her companion handed her a hymn-book.

The minister preached very simply and sincerely, in words that a child might have comprehended. It was nothing to him that his auditors were few. That was his Master's affair. The good old man had learned to leave such things with Christ. I question whether Mr. Evans listened more than vaguely to the preaching. His thoughts were busy with long ago. He had a happy morning.

When the collection was taken there was a crisp five dollar bill among the pennies and nickels. It was a thank-offering, though the giver did not call it that. Horace Evans was aware of an impulse towards nobler living, and over the dull routine of his money-making days, it had come like the breath of the South wind that means tonic and refreshment.

"If," he said to himself, "Dave's little girl keeps straight on, as she has gone thus far, I'll have to go back to mother's old paths. I'd like to, I believe. I wish Elizabeth had been started as Janet has. A woman ought to be a Christian."

The stranger in the pulpit prayed that day, because it was his custom, for any stranger in the pew, and to two hearts, his petition was full of inspiration and comfort. One was the mill owner's, the other, that of the little teacher from Springdale, who was sitting beside Nancy Wiburn. Pray, who was Nancy Wiburn? Had you inquired at Dene's Mills, the reply would have been, "Nobody knows. Nancy is a waif. Nancy is a puzzle, an enigma."

Nancy herself, if asked, could have told little. She had the peculiarly isolated feeling of a child who had spent her earliest years in an asylum. In babyhood, she had been brought to the fostering care of an orphanage, and let orphanages be ever so wisely managed, they are not homes. There is too much discipline, there is too little individual nurture. When she was seven years old, Nancy had been legally adopted by Miss Caroline Wiburn, a spinster who kept a boarding-house for factory operatives. According to her light, Miss Wiburn had treated Nancy with kindness; food, shelter, and clothes had

been provided, and during certain months of the year, schooling had been given, but of love, of petting, of caressing, and the little confidences which make daily life sweet, the child had known nothing. Dry bread had been hers, never bread and honey. As a little drudge, she had spent the years between seven and fourteen, and then came Miss Wiburn's death. Nancy was old enough to go into the factory, and she did so, supporting herself partly, thus, and partly by services in housework in the home of a friend of Miss Wiburn for three years. She had then gone away, and had only lately returned.

As they came out of church, Nancy extended her hand to Janet.

"I have been wanting to see you at the school," she said. "I am coming to-morrow. This summer I am spending with Mrs. Gracy, as her companion, and she gives me some time to myself for study. Drawing is really what I love, but I know that I need something besides that, and I am going to college in the fall. I think I can work my way. May I stop in at the school after three o'clock? I want to see you about my algebra: it is very weak."

The engagement was made, and Janet joined Mr. Evans and Elizabeth.

"I saw you sat with Nancy Wiburn," said the latter. "Why didn't you come into our pew?"

"I didn't know which it was."

"Well, you are to sit there after this," said Mr. Evans.

"What were you and Nancy talking about so earnestly, may I ask?"

"She is going to college in the fall, and wants

some coaching." Mr. Evans puckered his lips into the form of a whistle.

"Truly," he said, "the social claims are becoming mixed. Nancy washing dishes, Nancy sweeping the sidewalk, Nancy scrubbing the floor, Nancy at the loom, I can understand, but Nancy Wiburn at Lucas college on an equal footing with you and Elizabeth, is beyond me. Why, she may have been a foundling."

"Possibly, father," said Elizabeth, "but she was, I've understood, an orphan of one of the great floods, and may have been gently born."

"At any rate she's God's child," said Janet, putting her finger on one great often forgotten truth.

When they came home luncheon was ready, but Mrs. Evans did not appear. She was ill.

"One of mamma's worst headaches," explained Elizabeth. "They leave her limp for two days after she's had one, and the pain is fiendish while they last. No, there isn't anything one can do, Janet. They are an inherited malady. Every Bradford that I ever heard of, has those acute, tearing, grinding headaches. You can only let mother alone, till the misery is over. Fortunately for me, I'm like my father and I don't have headaches." Really, Elizabeth did not seem to much mind her mother's having them. Familiarity with the trouble had blunted her pity.

Janet was accustomed to ministering to *her* mother, when exhausting nervous pain racked her, and this policy of letting alone, did not commend itself as wise. She was passing Mrs. Evans' door when the low moans from the tortured sufferer gave her a pang, and an excuse to stop.

"What if it were my mother?" she thought. "Father or Hughie would know what to do. I can at least try to help Mrs. Evans."

It was a novelty to one who was accustomed to let her distress wear itself out, to find gentle but very competent hands, smoothing her tumbled bed, a hot water bag placed at her feet, and a mustard leaf at the back of her neck. The room was darkened; the nurse who went back and forth, without rustling or disturbance as if she were a trained hospital attendant, after a little coaxed away the worst of the pain; and Mrs. Evans slept. When she wakened it looked as if Janet had never gone away, for there she was, with a cup of hot bouillon and a wafer, and, though she protested that she could not take a mouthful, the lady was persuaded to try a spoonful at a time, till the cup was emptied.

"Where did you learn to take care of an invalid?" said Elizabeth, the next day, admiringly. "Father and I are both so well, we haven't much compassion, and I don't know the first thing about nursing. Indeed, I fly to the farthest corner of the house and shut myself in, if anybody is suffering. I can't relieve, and I can't bear to see one in pain. But you go right ahead and do things."

"I've had to, in the manse, being the only girl."

"And is your mother often ill?"

"She isn't very strong, and we try to save her all we can. Then, I've gone round with dad, and helped nurse the congregation."

"I can't see where you learned enough to get ready for college, any more than Nancy Wiburn did," exclaimed Elizabeth, brusquely. "She's been at

work all her life, and I declare you haven't been any better off. When have you had time?"

Janet colored. "To tell the truth, Elizabeth, I *don't* know enough to teach. I'm desperately afraid of the bigger girls. I don't mind the boys half as much, and they are mostly little fellows like Ralph and Jack at home. I'm fearfully lax in keeping order, and I'm in terror lest some of the trustees shall come in and discover how childish I am, and how incompetent."

"Then, pray why did you begin?" inquired Elizabeth naturally. "Not that I believe all you say."

"For a purely personal and I'm half ashamed to confess, mercenary reason. I cannot have the clothes I want next winter, if I do not somehow earn them, and this is the only way. You see I haven't been much at school. Dad has taught me all I know, and prepared me for college. I am prepared, Elizabeth, and have passed everything without a condition, thanks to dad, and I'm going in on a scholarship. Between my earnings and Aunt Katherine's old things, I'll be presentable among the rest."

This talk took place on a Saturday afternoon, as the girls were driving. There was an extra seat in the carriage. As if by a bit of mental telepathy, the same thought occurred to both at the same moment, but Janet did not utter hers; Elizabeth did. She drew rein, turned about, and with an exclamation of, "Why not?" halted before old Mrs. Gracy's door.

"Just hold Prince a moment, please, Janet. I'm going in to ask if Mrs. Gracy can spare Nancy for an hour. We three girls are all going to college together. I'd like to find out where *she* prepared. I

am the bright and shining product of Mrs. Elmen-dorf's school; you are certainly aware that her girls are thoroughly fitted for the entrance exams. of all the best colleges, aren't you, Janet?"

Laughing and looking over her shoulder, she went in and invited Nancy for a drive. Mrs. Gracy was herself out for the day and Nancy at liberty, and at her easel. She put it away, and followed Elizabeth to the carriage.

"Now Nancy Wiburn," she said, as Prince trotted superbly over the levels, "we have come to a good part of the road where it isn't rough and stony, and Janet and I want to know who prepared you for college?"

"I have thus far, fought my way on alone," said Nancy composedly. "Though I've had lifts, a lift here, a helping hand there. Miss Ward is giving me the latter now, and so are you, Miss Evans."

"As we are three girls together, suppose we don't say Miss. I call you Nancy. You must say Elizabeth to me and this is Janet."

"Plain Janet," confirmed the latter, looking very pretty indeed as she said it.

Nancy blushed, a deep blush, that retreated and left her pale. Her two companions somehow felt uncomfortable, as if they had made a mistake, but nobody ever saw Elizabeth embarrassed very long at a time. She had the assured position of a great lady at Dene's Mills; she had been a personage there ever since her babyhood. So she took Nancy to task without hesitation.

"To blush in that way, Nancy, is quite needless. Pray don't. Why, I know all about you and how brave and sweet and useful you've been ever since

you were a grave little creature, like a wee old-fashioned woman, putting up with Miss Caroline's queer tempers like an angel, and wearing such funny frocks and aprons, and your hair strained back like a mandarin on a teacup, and you never minding a bit."

"Never minding," exclaimed Nancy, with flashing eyes. "I did mind. I hated, I loathed, I abhorred those horrid old aprons and ridiculous frocks. I ought to have been grateful, but I was a rebel. A silent one of course. It began, my hating and loathing in the asylum, where we were dressed precisely alike, a most unkind thing for kind people to do, so that our very uniform shouted charity children at every one we met. I never loved Miss Caroline, for though she did not mean to, she always kept reminding me that I was not like other children, 'you poor little stray kitten,' was her favorite pet name for me. Once I nearly broke her heart by putting one of my aprons in the kitchen stove. I went supperless to bed, but I didn't care."

Janet's face was full of pity. She recalled her own happy days in the manse, so loved, so guarded, so understood. Why had she not been an even better daughter? One's mercies sometimes rise up and challenge us, filling us with compunction at the base way we take them for granted.

"Children should be studied more than they are," she said, trying to change the subject and make it less personal, as she had often seen her tactful mother do; "I intend to govern my school here at the Mills, wholly by love and sympathy."

Elizabeth laughed. "When the children ride over you, Janet, send for me, and I'll come in with a stick.

That's what these children are used to, a word and a blow, poor things."

"Love can be stern," replied Janet with a glint in her eyes that showed she did not mean to be overridden, and Elizabeth laughed again. Her mirth was infectious. Not one of the three was yet too old to giggle at nothing, for the pure pleasure of being alive. This is one of girlhood's monopolies.

"Did you ever burn another apron, Nan?" asked Elizabeth.

"Not I. I soon ceased being so silly and wasteful. Miss Caroline died, then I hadn't much time to think about myself. And when I first went to the dear little school, where you are teaching now, Miss Janet, a new joy came to me, the joy of books, of learning, of discovery. I grew too happy over my books to mind outside things. I was easily at the top of my class always. It was no trouble for me to learn, no trouble at all, Miss Elizabeth."

"Nancy," Elizabeth's tone was decided, and she stopped Prince that he might rest before beginning to climb a very steep hill. "Explain to me why you are so sensitive just now. You have never done anything disgraceful. Poverty is no disgrace. Don't be absurd, child. Should you stand off primly and refuse us sisterhood when we ask it?"

"Because," said Nancy, looking her questioner squarely in the eyes, "because I am nothing and nobody. I have a right to be called Nancy Wiburn, I suppose, since Miss Caroline gave me her surname. On the asylum register I was Nancy Nameless. It's terrible. The iron of my lack of kindred and of background is a ceaseless brand in my soul."

“Well, then, you would better stop being morbid over it, my dear, and let the branding business end right here before you go up to college with us. It’s this way, Nancy. When the flood swept away every house in your village in an hour, children were left orphaned, children of birth as good as ours: you have no right whatever to reflect on your parents, by a thought that they were not good people, that you are not the daughter of a pure clean home. On my word, Nancy, I’m ashamed of you for harboring such a suspicion. Don’t think of yourself as nobody’s child any longer. You are probably somebody’s child, a somebody who liked books and pictures and all refined things. Why, I’m not a Christian as Janet is, but if I were, I’d say you were reflecting on God Himself.”

“You’ll find out God’s meaning for you in God’s time,” said Janet, tenderly, “so Nancy, take Elizabeth’s advice, and don’t brood. I think she’s right. One must accept God’s will, whatever it is, accept it as the only thing, and the very, very best thing there is, otherwise one never has any repose.”

“I will try, Elizabeth and Janet,” answered Nancy, and then and there began the friendship of the three girls, a triply welded band which lasted all their days. As they plodded over the mountain road between the sweet spicy forests, where squirrels darted and sometimes a bird sang, Nancy told them the story of her three years in Boston.

As Janet listened, there came to her a little poem of Robert Louis Stevenson, that might have been written for Nancy; then and ever after she associated the stanzas with her.

“Trusty, dusky, vivid, true
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight
The great artificer made my mate.

“Honor, anger, valor, fire,
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench, or evil stir,
The mighty master gave to her.”

“It came over me one day when I was seventeen,” said Nancy, “that I might keep on in the factory, pulling threads out one by one and laying them side by side all day long, that I might keep on doing that till I was a gray bent old woman and nothing could ever come of it. Nothing more. I made good wages, and the work was not hard, but it was the monotony of it, no change, no hope. *That* I couldn’t bear. And the girls were not like me, book-hungry. They laughed and chatted and walked with the boys in the evenings and had their mothers and homes and the little sisters and brothers. I had nobody. I had saved a little, so I went to town to try my luck. First I tried to find employment in a shop, but I was a stranger and could not get in. As my little money dwindled away, I made up my mind to take the only work one can get without any difficulty, and I went to an Intelligence office, and applied for a place as second maid. For you see, I knew how to do housework, and I am glad I did, and do. I am expecting to do it, most of the time I am in college.

“Well, I took the first opening, and it was in a surburban town near Boston. Most of the women who were looking for situations refused to go to the surburbs: they wanted to be near their own people.

As I was by myself, and had been brought up in a country village, I liked it much better than the town. My employer was a young married lady who belonged to a pleasant set of people. She didn't know a great deal about housekeeping, and had to depend on Bridget and me. We had more to do than would have happened, if she had known how hard or how easy work was, or if she had not been bound by a system which was inflexible, because she knew no way of modifying it. The result was that Bridget came and went: there was misunderstanding between the kitchen and parlor from week's end to week's end, but I stayed on, and gradually became a sort of housekeeper, doing most of the work and all of the cooking in my own way, with a laundress coming for the washing and ironing. So two years passed, and I managed to get on very well with my books, using every spare moment to study, till one day when Mrs. Allison's Wednesday Club was meeting at our house, her cousin Sophy happened to come out to the kitchen and found me watching the oven, with a Greek grammar on my lap. She asked a few questions, and a day or two afterwards, Mrs. Allison herself told me that she and Miss Sophy wanted me to have more time and more help for my books, since I was set on having a good education."

"Isn't that Boston for you?" said Elizabeth. "Go on, Nancy. This is interesting."

"So another Bridget was sent for and installed, and I was given lighter work, and Miss Sophy and her Uncle Theodore, who was a professor, had me come to them at regular hours for the next year. And that's how I was made ready for the next step."

"But Nancy, you spend a good deal of time on drawing and designing. Why do you not devote your whole energy to that? I hear you have extraordinary talent. People say so."

"Well, Miss Elizabeth," and Nancy Wiburn hesitated for a word, "I mean to be an artist, if I live and if I can, but I want to be a broad-minded woman too, as well, and I think I may accomplish both ends if I persevere."

That night as Elizabeth and Janet were talking over the day on the moonlit veranda, a neighbor or two happened in. Summer in the country invites to neighborly meetings, without set purposes. One of the friends was the doctor of Dene's Mills, another the manager of the thread factory, and a third was a young kinsman of Mr. Evans who was spending his vacation among the mountains, making his home with a certain Great-aunt Sarah Ritchie. Tom Evans was a senior at Amherst, and had not yet decided on his profession. Mr. Evans offered him a position in business, his father urged him to study law, and he was at a standstill, having arrived as yet at no decision. At that moment his most serious avocation in life was fishing.

"By the way, Elizabeth," he announced, "Aunt Sarah was rather vexed with you to-day."

"I have not seen Aunt Sarah for three days."

"That may be, but she has seen you. Your present offense is the company you keep."

"Surely auntie does not disapprove of Janet. Why, she has asked her to supper, a mark of peculiar favor."

"Not Miss Janet of course. But you were seen

driving with another young woman, Nancy Lee, Nancy Wiburn that is, and Aunt Sarah felt that you must be cautioned, so prepare for a visit to-morrow."

"If aunt knew Nancy—knew how brave and aspiring she is, her opinion of her would be changed, but auntie belongs to the ultra conservatives and she cannot understand. Well, poor Nancy has not often time for outings."

"You are quite right, Elizabeth," said Doctor Page. "Nancy is not an ordinary girl. I have had an illustration of that within the hour. I was called to see a little patient to-night at the collieries—the cluster of cabins, Miss Janet, near the street that leads to the coal breaker. The boy had been badly scalded: his mother is a feeble, slatternly creature who neglects her children and reads novels—a very trying wife for a poor man to have, let me tell you. It was owing to her negligence that the child tipped over the kettle on his poor little feet. I hope he isn't crippled for life. The father came home, and was at once broken-hearted over his boy and madly angry with the boy's mother. He railed at her with a vehemence of profanity such as I never heard and would have knocked her down if I had not been there. She cowered away in her fright, like a rabbit in a trap. I do suppose he beats her, she's provoking enough; between his rage and her fright I could get no assistance, and I needed a nurse. We've got to have a hospital here, before another year, got to have it, you gentlemen take notice. It's a humane necessity, accidents are forever occurring. Well there was a sudden lull, and it was caused by the quiet coming in of whom do you suppose? Nancy.

She appeared as if she had fallen from the skies. She was cool, ready, supplied with all that was needed. 'Hush, John, for shame!' she cried, and the big blundering fool of a madman did hush. 'Mary, stop crying, and come help the doctor,' and Mary obeyed. Nancy dominated the situation, and I left her sitting by the little fellow and she said she would stay the night."

"Could Mrs. Gracy spare her?"

"I called by at Mrs. Gracy's and told her where Nancy was. 'I sent her,' said she. 'I heard there had been an accident, and Nancy is nearly as good as a doctor.'"

Mrs. Evans here spoke: "Why, pray, does not Nancy go to the hospital school and become a nurse? I think she ought to."

"Too big for that, madam," the doctor said. "She's going to be a famous woman, one of these days or I am a false prophet."

"Little Nancy! Well, it may be, but I'm like Aunt Sarah, I can't accommodate myself to these developments all at once, especially when we can never be sure who the people were."

"It doesn't matter much, I think," said the doctor. "I know a lot of very wretched low-down characters, whose family connections are aristocratic. We must not be narrow, dear Mrs. Evans."

Now and then Janet had an attack of homesickness. Unaccountably one longed to creep in and sit at her father's feet, to help her mother with the boys' mending. Suddenly it occurred to her that she was holding herself away from the home folks longer than she needed. The Evans would not let her pay

her board, so there would be no extravagance in going home for the Fourth of July.

"But Janet, I'm to have a house party," pleaded Elizabeth, "and I am anxious to have my friends meet you."

"It would be beautiful, dearest, but just think! I can take Friday afternoon's train, and slip in to the manse at tea time, and surprise dad and mother. I can have Saturday, Sunday, and Monday at home, and if Nancy will take morning school for me, that is if Mrs. Gracy will let her, I needn't get back until Tuesday noon."

"Don't worry about your substitute, little girl. If Nancy doesn't take your place, I will."

And so Janet went home.

III

CHANGES

IT was well that she could go, for important changes were impending and, if she were lonesome, she was not the only one to feel so.

The little circle in the manse was quite forlorn without Janet, and father and mother felt bereft and a little dreary. Mr. Ward's rusty top buggy and fat old pony were oftener on the road than ever, and he stayed less in his study, his wife taking Janet's place beside him as he visited outlying parishioners. Prodged by the deacons, Mr. Leland and others equally officious, Mr. Ward attempted to preach sermons that would please the young people, with the natural result that they pleased nobody. For it is given to no David in this world to wear the armor of any Saul, and a man must do his work in his own way if it is to be effective work. The little church on Sabbath morning showed many empty pews, for the younger members were growing indifferent and the older ones half-hearted. A wave of Sabbath-breaking had swept over the land, and on summer Sunday mornings, an army of bicyclers, or a troop of merry people with golf sticks in their hands passed the old sanctuary, on their way to a day's outdoor sport. By little gradations, Mr. Ward's church was yielding to the influence of this example from the world and he felt himself unable to cope with the new conditions.

"They need a new voice. They need a younger man," he said to his wife one day as they jogged over the steep road, skirting a strip of forest, where the shadows lay thick. Far above them a thrush sang with a clear silver note. Mrs. Ward ever afterwards associated that song of the thrush with an hour, the pain of which was oddly mingled with a thrill of pleasure.

"If we go from here, dear," she said, "we shall go like Abram of old, not knowing whither."

"As yet I do not hear God telling me where to go," he answered. "I see but a single step ahead and that is to resign this pastorate."

"Should you not think of Janet and the boys?" said the wife. "We have a roof over us here. And we've nothing to depend on—no savings. What should we do?"

"That part wrings my heart;"—he turned a pale set face towards her. "I never meant when we were married to bring you into a life of such hardship as you have had and must yet have, sharing the fortunes of an unsuccessful man. I am afraid I am a failure."

"Never say that, dear husband. Think of the good you have done. The sorrowful you have comforted, the sick you have ministered to. Your work has been well done. And you have had a great deal to bear too, especially lately since the people have grown exacting, and at the same time have acted as if we were their beneficiaries. I have been relieved that Janet has been out of it these last weeks, for she is vehement and apt to speak too freely, poor child."

"My darling, you are always a help to me. Well, we are united on the question of leaving here, and I

would rather walk with God in the dark than walk alone in the light."

"So would I."

When they reached home, a note from Janet awaited them. She was coming the next day. The parents were glad to take her into their counsel. Meanwhile Mr. Ward wrote to the secretary of the Board of Home Missions, offering himself for any post of service on the frontier. Hardly had his letter gone, when one arrived from an old friend in the mountains of Tennessee. In fact it had been written and was on its way when the Wards had their talk upon the forest road.

"Dear Dave," wrote this friend, "I am afraid that you will have to search a long way back in memory to find Ralph Huntoon, but when you do recall old college days, I hope he is not quite forgotten. You would not know the old Ralph should you meet him now. Fancy a fellow with shaggy, untrimmed beard, and baggy trousers and coat of faded butter-nut brown, riding across country on a big roan horse that can find his way anywhere in the dark, and is used to going wherever there is fever or accident or any untoward thing, as a doctor's horse should. With all my burning ambitions, I am just a country doctor, old fellow. I had more than one chance to work in the cities, and to make a name as a surgeon, but I never could get settled in a town. The mountains kept calling me back. So here I am at forty-eight in old Tennessee, hardworking and poor, but very happy and with some beautiful cases that are worth a man's effort and skill. I thank God I've done some good here, and now, this is what else

I'm impelled to do. I don't know that there's the ghost of a hope. The thing on the face of it looks preposterous, absurd, and you may chuck my letter into the waste-basket, though I know you'll answer it first for old times' sake.

"We have a queer population here in this out of the world place. Men and women silent as the hills around them. Often illiterate but seldom unintelligent. Loyal, prejudiced, narrow, sensitive, and suspicious of strangers, they are a mass of contradictions, these mountain folk, but I, who belong to the stock, understand and love them. We have need here of the school and the church, perhaps I should put the second first, but my idea has been that the two must go hand in hand. We need a missionary, and a teacher; the two should be combined in one person. Though poverty presses, there is a bit of land around an old manse, and there is a schoolhouse that will make a good church on Sundays, and what we need is a preacher. David, won't you take the job? I can see how much I'm asking. But you have sons who can grow up with the country. When the railroad is cut through, prosperity is coming our way. Meanwhile there isn't the Hindu or the New Zealander or the fetish worshipping African who needs Christ more than my people here in the mountains. I don't want a boy fresh from the seminary. I don't want a man who has known no suffering. I want you, my old classmate.

"Now, you'll laugh at me. But I've been praying over this matter as Cornelius prayed before the Lord sent him Peter. I've prayed before I laid my head on my saddle to snatch a little sleep on the mud floor of

a hut, where on the cot beside me lay a miner with a broken leg and a touch of fever. I've prayed in my lonely house. You don't know it, but I lost my wife five years ago, and we had no children. I know God answers prayer. And this happened. I woke up in the middle of the night and in my first half conscious glance, I saw standing in the moonbeams by the window, a beautiful shining angel. Some fantastic tracery of leaf and bough, some wavering of the breeze against the pane, no doubt, but to me, half sleeping, half waking, an angel. The form melted and lost itself in the moonbeams as I gazed, but as plainly as if a voice had spoken audibly, I heard these words: 'Send for David Ward! Send for David Ward!' So I'm sending. I'm making out your call, Dave. You won't starve, and you won't freeze, and you'll do good. Turn over that parish North to some younger hand, pick up your wife and children, and come to us, and the Lord bless you! Come, man, to the church. On second thoughts, I'll not ask you to take up school-keeping for there won't be time. I'll be counting the days until I hear from you."

In the den, the minister dropped on his knees and thanked God. Then he read the letter to his wife. And she read it in turn a little later to Janet whose eyes shone with gladness.

"Are you willing?" said the minister to his help-mate, and she answered, "Where thou goest, I will go," and thus they turned and closed one long page of their lives and began another.

There were not wanting tears when they said good-bye. Transplanting trees that have struck deep roots is never easy work, and the turned up sod

shows a scar for a while. But they went southward hopefully. It was rather a comfort that the people wept to part with them; even Mr. Leland lamented.

Nobody was more interested in the change of base than Mr. Evans, whose thoughtfulness made the long journey both luxurious and inexpensive, and who promised to stand valiantly back of Mr. Ward in the new field.

"It looks as if I ought to resign my thoughts of college," said Janet. "You will need me, dearest mother, in settling down in a new place." This was when they talked it over before the start. Somehow the mere thought of the radical departure had stirred some new spring of vitality in the little mother. She was stronger and more enthusiastic than she had been for years.

"Not at all," she had said, firmly. "I'll manage with your father and the boys. And you shall go to college from Mr. Evans's home with Elizabeth and your other friend. The only regret I feel is that so long a time must elapse before you see the new home. But we must both be brave, Janet. I can see that this is the best thing for your father. When I realized that his heart was slowly breaking, and that he was becoming atrophied in this field, I felt that we *must* go somewhere. Why, my love, I had even contemplated scattering the boys about among the kindred and going to Aunt Jessany's myself, and leaving him free to wander off alone. Isn't this far, far better? God's hand is in it, dear."

"You're going to a lonesome neighborhood, little mother."

"Oh! what of it? No house can be lonesome

where your father is and the boys are making merry," and so the little woman rose above the suggestion of despondency and was like a girl again.

It would be nearly impossible to trace by any process that was at all superficial the steps that had led Dr. Huntoon to recall Mr. Ward. For years the two had been widely separated. But a few months before this letter was written the Doctor had been looking over some old text-books, and had come upon a *carte de visite* of David Ward, hidden in a volume of medical lectures. Then he tried to piece together such fragmentary knowledge as he had had of him since, and finally he had written to a relative in New York, asking for his address. Borne in upon him from the outside, the impression had deepened that Ward was the man to take up a hard yet interesting field, with little promise of earthly reward, but a big prospect of harvest heavenward. Then came his visitation from the angel in the waking dream, and the letter of urgent invitation.

"Thank the dear Lord when you say farewell to Uncle Pumblechook," wrote Janet, and her father laughed.

"I fancy there are Pumblechooks enough in most places, to keep God's ministers humble and lowly in their minds."

"Well, maybe so," said Mrs. Ward, "but they won't crop up during the first year. The first year is always a breaking-spell, and the novelty doesn't quite wear off during the second. But there—a home mission work must be altogether different from such work as we have in our congregations in older places. We'll look for nothing but joy."

Janet threw herself into her teaching with greater ardor than ever as she approached the end of the term. She would have two hundred dollars in hand when the work was done, for board had cost her nothing, and between Mrs. Evans and her aunt who had returned from abroad, she was fitted out with a most comfortable wardrobe. In vain she rebelled. Mrs. Evans pleased herself in the matter declaring that Janet had really earned all she received by her company in the house, and the good she had done Elizabeth. So Janet went to college feeling rich.

On the day her school closed, there were exercises to which parents and friends were asked; the scholars sang and recited, and the minister came in and gave out prizes and certificates of merit. One old farmer, not on the programme, rose and asked permission to say a word at the close. He had been an admiring observer of the entertainment.

"I've always had the notion," he said, "that it needed a young man to tackle this school in the winter, but if Miss Ward'll stay, I'd give her my vote. She's kep' the smoothest summer school we've ever had in these parts, and I don't see the sense of her givin' it up."

The compliment was so sincere and spontaneous that Janet appreciated it. She went to the good man, took his hard hand, and told him she needed more schooling herself.

"Well, well," he said, "p'raps you're right, p'raps so. You're only a slip of a girl, and the big boys might be more than you could handle. But I feel as if you'd do."

Nancy's modest little trunk contained only must-

haves when she went away finally in the same train with Janet and Elizabeth. She had arranged to pay for her tuition by work in the domestic department of Lucas College, and so her year loomed before her formidably, but everything Nancy had gained in her life, she had acquired by her own hands, and she was undaunted.

Mrs. Evans took her daughter aside the night before they left home.

"I wish you to be kind to Nancy, my dear, as a matter of course, but I would prefer your avoiding intimacy. A good deal depends on the associates you make from the first, and I cannot feel that you and Nancy are socially on the same plane."

Elizabeth shrugged her shoulders. A stubborn look which was characteristic came over her face. Her mother shook her head.

"Now, my daughter, I am not asking a pledge. I am merely stating a preference. As it looks to me you might as well make a friend of Bridget or Katrine in the kitchen, as of Nancy. Your paths in life will lie apart. All I wish is that you shall be amiable and kind but not admit her to your intimacy. Do be reasonable to satisfy me."

"Mother," said Elizabeth, "this advice is given from your standpoint, but I've been learning to view things latterly from another. Janet does not see them as you do. Why should I not be friends with Katrine and Bridget, at least to some extent, so far as we meet on common ground? Why should I exclude Nancy from my love? Not that she shows the least disposition to force hers on me. The day is coming, mother, when you and I may be proud to be

admitted to Nancy's circle, to say that we knew her in childhood. Janet and I will probably do our duty in the station to which it has pleased God to call us, but Nancy Wiburn will be great."

The mother said no more. But she was unconvinced. She could not overcome patrician traditions, and it hurt her to note that Elizabeth was becoming increasingly democratic.

"I wish I had vetoed this whole thing and taken her to Europe," she said to her husband. "I dislike these leveling notions. They are well enough for poor girls, but Elizabeth with her beauty and distinction and wealth, should be like a young princess. Mark my words, Horace, our daughter will go into settlement work yet. I can see where this drifting will land her, and I recoil from it. She won't fulfill my ideal."

"Will it not be better if she fulfill a noble one of her own?" said the broader-minded father. "Don't worry, my dear. When we reach a certain critical point, we parents have to stand aside, and let our children work out their own salvation. If the larger claim, as Jane Addams phrases it, come to our daughter, we cannot interfere. Meanwhile she will meet a few hundreds of young girls at college, from all sorts of ranks and conditions, and she'll probably find new friends among some of them. And Nancy Wiburn will be too busy for much recreation. I'm not sure how my girl will come through the college ordeal, but I know Nancy will cover herself with glory!"

"What you all see in her, puzzles me," said the lady, and the question dropped. Mrs. Evans was a

shining specimen of the domestic woman, accustomed to ease and hemmed in by use and wont. It was inevitable that she and her daughter should clash, and fail to understand one another. Mr. Evans comprehended Elizabeth far better than her mother did, but he had the man's invariable attitude towards household friction, which was never agreeable to him, and seemed causeless. He finally turned to his newspaper, merely adding again,

"Don't borrow trouble. Girls sometimes marry, and then their fads and unrest are all settled over housekeeping and baby rearing. Elizabeth may solve her problems as you did."

"The girls of my period didn't have problems, Horace. They took destiny as it came, and were contented at home. Everything is changing in these days. And not for the better."

"Mother."

"What is it, daughter?"

"Look down the driveway. There come Great-aunt Sarah and Mrs. Luther Evans and the twins."

"Sure enough. This is a surprise, and a pleasant one. Hurry, Elizabeth, and see that the luncheon table is reset, and that there is plenty for all. Auntie wanted to see you, I suppose; she's not been here in months," and the hospitable lady bustled down to meet her relatives at the door.

Great-aunt Sarah was an autocrat in the family connection. A keen faced old gentlewoman with black eyes bright as a hawk's, and a curt manner of speech that matched them. She was a person to whom the clan deferred. Mrs. Luther Evans was the wife of a third cousin and the twins were weedy

girls turned fourteen. The party were most cordially received.

"Janet," said Elizabeth, looking in at her friend's room, "slip on your pale blue dimity before luncheon. Aunt Sarah has never met you, and I want her to see you looking your prettiest."

"Won't this fresh shirt waist and short skirt do?" inquired Janet, tearing herself reluctantly from a German translation. "I'm going for a tramp with Nancy as soon as luncheon is over. The children at Besom's Hollow are either ill or disaffected. They've given up coming to Sunday-school and Nancy and I want to make a visit of conciliation."

"Oh, put on the dimity, do, there's a dear; we always use a little ceremony with our great-aunt. She's a lady of the old régime. Mother gets lots of her aristocratic ideas from her. You can put these togs on again after luncheon."

So it was a very dainty little lady in a blue frock which was most becoming who made her curtsy to Great-aunt Sarah, a few moments later.

"Shall you girls room together when you are at college?" inquired the old lady.

"No," said Elizabeth regretfully. "We shall not even be in the same house. It's a shame."

"How does that happen? I should think your father might arrange anything he chose."

"No, dear Aunt Sarah, there are some things even daddy can't manage, and one of these is the order of precedence in one's quarters at college. My application for a room in the Hale House on the campus was made three years ago. Janet did not then know that she was going, nor did I know her."

"Besides," said Janet, very simply, "I couldn't afford to live in Hale House with Elizabeth. I must be domiciled much less ideally, though I shall be very comfortable boarding in the village."

"But you'll be in the same classes, and with the same set?"

"Why, of course, we'll be together most of our time," answered Elizabeth without hesitation, which showed how little she really knew about it. For a college is a world by itself, and the several sets are as diverse as the cliques and groups in society in the world outside. Naturally the young women who live under the same roof are brought into closer daily intercourse than those who are established elsewhere. Janet and Elizabeth were to move in different orbits during their college years, but of that they had no premonition that day.

"Why do you inquire?" The question came from Mrs. Evans.

"Only that I thought if these two girls were to have the good luck to be together, that I could send them some beautiful old furniture for their sitting-room. I have a mahogany desk that belonged to my mother, and a fine square old sofa, and two rocking-chairs that I can spare, and a lot of blue china. You can't buy such things for money. But if Elizabeth's to share her quarters with some fly-away thing from the South, or some reckless creature from a Western ranch, I'd not feel safe about them. Now, Janet here, would take as much care of fine furniture as I would myself."

"What makes you think so, aunty?"

"Oh, I can tell. I'm never deceived. I know a

nice girl when I see her, a girl who's had good bringing up."

"It's the blue dimity," whispered Elizabeth in an aside. "I'll tell you what to do, aunty," she said, "keep the furniture until Janet is a junior; by that time somebody may fall out or go home and she and I can be together. In the meantime I'm to have only a single room, and mother's going in with me to see me settled, and get what I must have. There are only campaign necessities provided by the college. The luxuries we must put in for ourselves."

"Whatever you do, Elizabeth, don't come back a learned woman," said Aunt Sarah. "I have a horror of a learned woman."

"There isn't much danger, I'm afraid. Janet has more probability of that fate than I."

Then the talk was diverted to another channel by Mrs. Luther and the twins.

IV

FRIENDS TOGETHER

ESTABLISHED in the busy order of college work, Janet found herself for the first time in her life in a position when she was at once independent and restrained. The situation was to her a peculiar one. Before many days she realized that here she was of very slight importance, she, who had been a central figure in her home, and in the parish, and who even at Dene's Mills, had been a good deal in the foreground. She was now only one girl among hundreds, and had her way to make, her influence to exert, as a unit in a place where as yet she was unknown. The experience was bewildering. As she confided to her mother, in her first long letter home, she felt herself to be the equal in years and claims to notice of the dignified seniors whose position was so assured. She even could have met without embarrassment, some of the younger professors, but she was hemmed in to the limits of the freshman class by barriers fine as cobweb and strong as granite. "Your poor little daughter is nobody here," she wrote; "how long she will remain so, who can tell?"

Her mother was full of sympathy, but Mr. Ward laughed at the note of discontentment.

"It will do Janet good," he said, "to find out what a big world it is and of how little consequence one young woman is among a host."

She was the lonelier at first because Elizabeth had met in her home on the campus, a trio of old school-mates who received her with open arms. They had memories in common, and took up the chapter of college life at the leaf they had turned down when they left the preparatory. Elizabeth was much occupied in making her room beautiful, and so full was her time of affairs and projects that except in class she hardly saw Janet for the first ten days. Janet's little nook in the boarding house was a plain corner room, already sufficiently furnished. The rag carpet on the floor covered it comfortably, and Janet did not aspire to rugs and portières or any superfluous ornament. Conspicuous on her bureau was a case containing the photographs of father, mother and the boys, and she wanted nothing more decorative than that reminder of home to hold her lingering eyes at morning and evening. The dear ones at home blessed her waking and her sleeping hours.

Work was much more strenuous than Janet had anticipated. When one has been used to the routine of a good preparatory school, she fits in easily to that of a higher grade, but Janet had learned on her father's lap and at his side, sitting on a footstool at her mother's knee, driving beside one of her brothers when the old pony took his leisurely pace across country to carry jelly to old Mrs. Darber, or a book to Miss Anstruther, the cripple who sat by her window watching for callers. Often she had worked out her algebra and geometry in the pauses of conversation, as she had reclined half curled up on the divan in the den, when the minister had finished sermon writing for the day, and her mother had come

in for her afternoon chat before tea. It had been delightful and profitable study, but very desultory and not carried on in the disciplinary methods which made tasks so simple for girls less well equipped than Janet. She found it absolutely imperative to spend a good deal more time in getting ready for her classes than Miss Holland, the dean, thought wise.

"You are losing your color, Miss Ward," said that lady. "You must be out more, exercise more. I do not want you to break down."

Janet promised, but half-heartedly. How was she to manage? Elizabeth, who was already one of the popular and leading spirits of the class, seemed to go to recitations lightly as a bird, and to come off with flying colors. Janet caught glimpses of her, saw that she was in the swim, so to speak, of the social life of the class, and, incidentally heard herself denominated a grind, by a girl who passed her with a friend, and had no idea that her voice carried so far. Somehow Janet hated to be called a grind. There was nothing disgraceful in the term, yet the idea made her cheek burn hotly.

Of Nancy she saw very little. But when they did meet, Nancy was the same quiet, self-poised, unconscious girl she had been at the Mills. She told Janet she was very busy. "That is what I am here for," she said simply.

"Have you made many acquaintances?" asked Janet. "Come up to my room and tell me how it goes with you. Do, there's a dear."

Nancy consulted her little silver watch.

"Yes, I will," she said. "You know, Janet, I am frankly out of everything except my work, so that I

don't mind remarks such as the one you say hurt you, though why it should is a puzzle. The only girls I know here are those in the Christian Union, and you know them too. It was lovely the way they welcomed me when I attended the first prayer-meeting. I thought you would surely be there, Janet. I mean the little service that is held before chapel on Sunday afternoon."

Janet blushed again, as deeply as when she had been called a grind and she felt, with more reason.

"Nancy," she said, "I have something to confess. I'm really very unhappy about it, but not so unhappy as I was, for I'm getting used to it. I cannot seem to be ready for Monday unless I study a good bit on Sunday; that's why I haven't been to any of the meetings, since the first when I gave them my name as a member, and that one you did not attend."

"No, I was new to my duties out of hours and hadn't them well in hand, as I now have, but I think for every reason, Sunday study is a mistake. One needs the rest from books for that one day, and if the fourth commandment means anything, it means that one is to keep it sacredly, and to refrain from fascinating secular work. I'm not yet a church member, dear, but if I were, I should try very hard not to break the Sabbath."

Janet's eyes were on a strip of blue in the carpet. It was delft blue, her mother was fond of the tint, and it brought her face vividly to the girl's mind.

"Forgive me, if I am too candid," said Nancy, as Janet was still silent.

"You are right," Janet spoke very low, but clearly. "Mother would disapprove of it, but what can I

do? And, to tell the plain truth, I don't see any great harm. Father used to insist that duties never conflict. Now it must be my duty to get the most I can out of college. To do that I must take a high place in my work. And where is the real harm of studying on Sunday? At home, I would have seen more clearly, here I'm confused."

Nancy was surprised, for Janet's course in the summer had been that of a Christian girl whose standard was high, and there had seemed no possibility of her ever lowering it. Yet, here, in the very initiative, she was letting go of her moorings, and drifting into habits foreign to her traditions. Nancy did not think that she was the one to preach, and she rose to take leave.

"I wouldn't go back on my record, if I were you, Janet," she said.

Hardly had the door closed on her, than a tap announced another visitor and in swept Elizabeth. She was daintily dressed, with a bunch of violets at her belt, and her prettiest toque perched jauntily on her golden head.

"A tea at Miss Sherwood's studio," she said. "Aren't you invited?"

"I don't know Miss Sherwood; she is one of the art teachers, isn't she, and I'm not studying art. How do you get time for so many teas and things, dear?"

"I have plenty of time; I don't mind skimming over the surface of some lessons," Elizabeth said airily; "you see I don't need to be profound. Aunt Sarah warned me not to turn out a learned woman, you remember. Also, my child, I'm copying you, and getting up some of my lectures on Sunday after-

noon. I never would have thought of that, but if you do it, there can't be much wrong, so my conscience is easy."

Janet's eyes were dismayed. "Elizabeth! who told you?" she cried.

"Who told me? Why, I don't know. It hasn't needed telling. You haven't been to the Bible classes or the prayer-meetings; you don't go anywhere; you don't take walks; I put two and two together, and observing the excellence of your recitations on Monday, I considered that you were—well—less a Puritan than you used to be. And I resolved to imitate you. Father advised me to. I noticed another thing, Janet. When Wednesday comes which is relief day, if there is any, you are too dead tired to study or to play."

Janet was much disturbed. Other people's opinions often flash a light over our actions, which is by way of revelation and interpretation.

"Elizabeth, I am sorry. I believe I've been selfish and inconsistent. If you will stop copying me, I'll be very grateful; I'll study not another hour on Sunday whether I'm conditioned in every subject this term or pass my exams. perfectly. I've not been true to my profession, Elizabeth. I'm sorry and ashamed. But I'll try to do better."

They talked a little longer and then Elizabeth tripped away to her tea, impressed, though she had not said so, by Janet's sensitive mood and her willingness to accept reproof. Though she had wondered at Janet's new phase of action, Elizabeth had quite lightly taken it for granted, and the group in which she was taking her place was not one to worry over what the girls thought trifles. Indeed her room-

mate openly scoffed at the Christian Union girls as Pharisees and goody-goody people, and there had been a moment when Elizabeth had joined issue with her. Janet, she was so sure, was neither a goody-goody character nor a Pharisee. Without formulating the matter to herself Elizabeth was pinning her faith to Janet, and Janet's absorption in study to the fracture of her principles of Sabbath keeping had given her friend a shock, and almost a push backward.

"Oh, dear," sighed Janet Ward, "why did I ever leave home? I felt so safe there." The memory came to her of an old servant in her early childhood who had responded to her mother's regrets over some error, "Ah! honey, how pious yo done toted yo'self in dem days!" "I did, I did," she said, "tote myself as if I were pious. It was nothing in the world but habit and self-righteousness. Now that I am away from my father, I can't care for good things as I used to; there isn't much heart and life in them. Now I've a past to live up to, and I don't know how. I don't seem to be Janet Ward. I feel as if there were no reality anywhere. I'm going to turn over a new leaf, but it isn't that I want to. It's only to please Nancy, and to set a good example for Elizabeth."

Another tap at the door.

"Come in!" said Janet reluctantly, for she was longing to bury herself in Chaucer, and forget the last half hour.

Entered Miss Evelyn Prescott. A tall, slender, dark-eyed young woman perhaps thirty years old, bearing herself with an air of distinction and grace. She was quietly dressed in dark cloth, with a silk lining. Janet noticed the rustle of it as her visitor

crossed the room and seated herself with her back to the light. Just to-day Janet would have preferred to welcome almost anybody else, for she was well aware that the girls called Miss Prescott a mind-reader, and at the moment Janet felt low in her mind. But her hand was extended in welcome, and there was no hint in her face that she would rather have seen somebody else. Her slight acquaintance with Miss Prescott led her to admiration of her tact and ability, and as one of the student secretaries of the Young Women's Christian Association, both these qualities had been largely developed.

"Miss Ward," she began, "I have come to have, if I may, a frank talk with you, that is, if you can spare me a little while. If this isn't a good time I can come again. I am to spend a week here with the Union, and I have been trying to find out who may be depended upon for leaders in its work."

"I am not one whom you ought to choose," was Janet's instant reply.

"May I ask why not? I have heard of you from old friends before you came here, and I know, by reputation at least, the home in which you were brought up. As a daughter of the manse, you have had a sort of preliminary training for service. I speak positively because I am a daughter of the manse myself. There is a little home in Ohio which expects me to do my duty, and if I'm not mistaken there's another in Tennessee which will be pained if you do not do yours."

Janet was silent.

The dark keen eyes searched her face, but it was inscrutable. She resented the abruptness of her visi-

tor's approach, and Miss Prescott instinctively changed her tactics.

"Forgive me if I am inopportune. But, dear Miss Ward, there is so much to do here; the field is so white to the harvest and the laborers are so few. Think of nine hundred girls all gathered here, and such a little handful of them Christians. Very, very few hostile, very few pronounced doubters, but the great majority apathetic, indifferent, caring only for themselves, their pleasures, their ambitions. What sort of influence is to go out from these halls? Educated women who are not Christians will do more harm than good when they take hold of the world's work. Whether you know it or not, Miss Ward, the Lord meant you for leadership. It is your birthright. Surely you do not mean to lightly esteem it."

She spoke winningly, persuasively.

"Miss Prescott," said Janet, "I have so lightly esteemed it, if you are right in your thought that it is my birthright, that thus far I have been bartering it for a mess of pottage. I don't know what to make of it, but since I've been here, everything has focused itself in one strong desire for brilliant scholarship. I have not cared much for anything but this. I have lost my grip on spiritual things, lost it wholly, and I haven't any comfort now in my religion, as I used to have. I believe just as I always have, but nothing seems real; it is as if a mirage were before me. You see you needn't count on me for help in the Christian life and atmosphere of this college."

"Why not?" said Miss Prescott gently. "Tell me, dear child, if you do not love the Master enough to stand up for Him still."

"I am sure I don't know. I fear I have very little love, very little loyalty. There is in my heart a good deal of reluctance, and a deadly fear of posing. I can't be a hypocrite, Miss Prescott."

"God forbid that you should. I will ask you another question. Do you doubt the Master's love for you, His power to keep you in perfect peace, His willingness to sustain you? Do you question His right to your service, His ownership in you?"

"No."

"Then, there is some reason for your coldness, for your wavering when He wants you. Will you let me ask something very close and personal? Have you kept up since you entered this college, your daily Bible reading, your daily and nightly prayer? If not, you may have let your soul lie exposed to the assaults of the tempter without the strong One to guard you from his darts."

"Miss Prescott," Janet looked her friend bravely in the eyes, "I have been so rushed since I began my work, that I've had no time for the morning watch I used to keep, and I've hurried through my prayers."

"Then, that accounts for everything. My dear, some of God's greatest saints, the busiest and most blessed of them all, have spent hours of every day in prayer. The first, the most important thing for you now is to get in touch again with God. Please believe me. One's power must come from Him."

"You are right. I know you are; I'll stop just where I am, and with God's help, will begin over again, at once."

"At half-past eight this evening," said Miss Prescott, rising, "there will be a little meeting in Miss

Barnard's room in South Hall. Perhaps ten, perhaps twenty girls will be there for a half hour. Please come. Bring any one you choose."

Janet promised. Miss Prescott went away. Janet took down her note-book and seated herself to study. But presently she laid it aside and reached for the Bible in which she had read over and over since her fifteenth birthday when her father had given it to her. Turning the pages slowly, she dwelt on a text that seemed to gleam starlike from the book of Isaiah.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

Janet knelt beside the bed and like a little child besought Jesus to forgive her, and bestow on her His peace. As she rose from her prayer, there was another knock at the door; it was to be, it appeared a day of interruptions. Without any impatience this time she opened it, and there again stood Elizabeth with a little shy blushing stranger.

"Janet dear, this is Barbara Maurice, a girl from Tennessee. She lives somewhere near the place you've gone to—your people I mean, and she's desperately homesick. I found out to-day that Barbara boards just opposite you in that white house behind the elms. I told her you'd be a friend worth having. Now I must run for I'm late as it is."

"I'll try to be a friend," said Janet, asking the sweet-voiced Southern girl in. Apologizing a little she came, and it wasn't long before Janet was taking up the gracious rôle of comforting a lonely and homesick heart. Barbara lived only thirty miles from the Wards' new manse, and thirty miles in that country meant near neighborhood.



IN SOUTH HALL

MISS BARNARD'S room in South Hall! Janet could not remember that she had met Miss Barnard and the matter was explained when she discovered later that Elsie Barnard was a senior. She asked Barbara Maurice to go with her, explaining that there was to be, she imagined, a little prayer-meeting and that Miss Prescott was to be present.

"I don't care for prayer-meetings," answered Barbara, "so maybe I'd better not go."

"Come for once," said Janet. "If you don't like the meeting you needn't go to another."

When they arrived the little room was already as full of girls as it could hold. Girls sat on the large divan which was a sofa by day and a bed by night, and well supplied with cushions and covered by a Bagdad rug, was a luxurious addition to the room. Girls sat in the two or three chairs, and then spilled over on the floor where they were closely packed; two or three deep were the rows of bright faces, some mirthful, some piquante, some thoughtful, and all youthful.

Miss Prescott asked if somebody would start a hymn, and at once Elsie Barnard's clear, bird-like voice began:

“Here again at Jesus’ feet
As one family we meet,
Scattered far o’er life’s rough sea,
Still as one we bow the knee ;
Saviour, hear us as we come
To Thy mercy-seat and throne,
Be not silent to our cry,
Hear Thy children’s litany.

“For the work so near Thy heart,
For our own imperfect part,
For the word to thousands preached
And the millions yet unreached ;
For the wanderers coming home ;
For the souls that will not come ;
For the unknown bended knee,
Hear Thy children’s litany.”

“That is a beautiful lyric, Elsie dear,” said Miss Prescott, “but only two or three of us know it. I suppose you’ve been practicing it since I saw you last. Now let us strike into something we can all sing,” and she suggested, “God loved the world of sinners lost, and ruined by the fall.” Everybody, indeed, was familiar with tune and words, and the melody filled the heart of Janet with an aching longing for the manse where they so often sung around the evening lamp.

The meeting was not strictly speaking one of prayer. It was rather an informal gathering, to consult about the campaign of the Christian Union. Officers were elected, plans were discussed, there was another hymn and a word of petition, everything crisp, brief, and hearty. Then the girls separated.

“Do not forget,” said Miss Prescott, “that in re-

ligious as in other work, common sense is invaluable, indeed indispensable, that the wishes of the faculty are always to be consulted and respected, and that we are to avoid anything that is not entirely genuine. Rest in Jesus Christ.

“Hidden in the hollow
Of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow,
Never traitor stand,
Not a surge of worry,
Not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry
Touch the spirit there.’”

As they returned to their home in the village leaving the lights of the campus behind, Barbara Maurice slipped her hand through Janet's arm.

“I like Miss Prescott.”

“I was sure you would, Miss Maurice.”

“Barbara, please; we're to be friends, aren't we?”

Janet smiled. It made her think of the day when she and Nancy and Elizabeth sealed a compact to use one another's Christian names. Well, why not? Girls who were to be together for four years need not be too ceremonious.

“If you are going to join the Christian Union, I will,” said Barbara emphatically. “I don't know the very first thing about the Bible, not the first thing, but I'll join a class, and study it. I wonder who'll teach it.”

“Probably some of us who have been in classes ourselves will have to take the teaching in turn,” said Janet. “I wouldn't mind, only I feel so unworthy. Since I came here, my lamp has been almost out.”

Barbara only half understood but she gave Janet's arm a little squeeze.

"It's lighted and burning now, so not a shadow of worry need vex you."

"Hello!" cried a familiar voice and Nancy, hastening along in a golf cape and tam-o'-shanter stopped for a moment's chat.

"Where are you going?" asked Janet.

"Home. I've finished my day's work. I'll stop in to-morrow, Janet, and give you my news. I have something fine to tell you."

"Who is that girl?"

"Nancy Wiburn, Barbara, a friend of mine, and the bravest girl in college."

"She has a cheery voice," said Barbara.

Nancy's good news when told was certainly the best Janet had heard in some days. She had amused herself last summer with sketching some droll situations with children figuring as the actors, and as a venture had sent her drawings, with bits of rhyme beneath, to a juvenile magazine.

Hearing nothing from the editor, she had concluded that her work was rejected, and with a novice's usual lack of courage, had made no inquiries. What was her joy when the mail brought her one morning a letter with a check, some criticisms and kind comments, and an intimation that more drawings would be acceptable if as good as those now accepted and paid for.

"It solves a half dozen problems for me, Janet," and Nancy's face was luminous. "I can do these so easily, and I can begin working on calendars, which they tell me at the Christian Union, will be much in

demand at the holidays if they are clever, and perhaps I can pay my way with brush and pencil, instead of with mop and dusting cloth."

Janet gave her a hug. This was good fortune, and to be rejoiced over.

"Now, dear, explain how the Christian Union has had anything to do with it, please."

"It has a lot to do with it. Do not you know that as well as helping students to a higher, deeper, spiritual life, it has committees to act as friends to any who are in need, and has besides a kind of woman's exchange that it carries on. In this great host of girls there are a good many who must help themselves, and it is true Christian work so to do it that the help does not imply patronage, nor interfere with one's independence. There is a girl in our class who is a good seamstress and she's mending her way through college. Another needs only a little money, so she shampoos hair and does manicuring, and she's been quite successful."

"How they do it," said Janet, "I am puzzled to understand. I can do with effort nothing beyond my daily tasks."

"Sometimes, Janet, one toils so strenuously that she loses the good effect of her toil. The mind grows dull like a knife that has lost its edge. I'm afraid you've been taking your work too seriously for the work's good and for your own.

"One of the professors gave our class a similar hint, a day or two ago. 'It's never worth while to work till one drops,'" he said seriously.

"A caution that most of us don't stand in need of. There comes Miss Prescott! Do you observe what a

fetching hat and gown she wears? If ever a woman understood the art of dressing to perfection it is she, yet she is a Christian worker!"

"May I ask why you say *yet*?"

"Oh, because somehow, one fancies a very religious person must be as to externals a frump or a guy. Miss Prescott is neither. She is almost an artist in taste and her choice of colors always delights me. Last summer, no, two summers ago, I saw her on a platform at a great conference of young women. It was July and torrid weather, the days sultry, the nights exhausting, and though in a region of hills, for the time we felt half smothered. But, standing there before five hundred girls, in a white frock without a ruffle, puff, or frill, with a pale blue stock and a broad sash of the same cool hue, tied round her waist, Miss Prescott was a picture. Her rarely magnetic eloquence was accentuated by her beauty; she constituted her own background.

"My grandmother," said Janet, "used to warn us against love of dress and display as vanity."

"But one may wear exquisite dress and not be vain. Display is vulgar wherever one finds it, and no refined woman dresses for the sake of showing how much she can afford to spend."

"Mother," said Janet, "has the art of making things over and she and I have generally been arrayed in the garments sent us by rich relations. You have no idea how careful a minister's family has to be, so that they may not violate the rules of propriety on their church. Once Aunt Katherine sent mother a very elegant cloth cape, trimmed with velvet appliqué, and finished off with a heavy fringe. We debated a

long while about that fringe, and finally mother ripped it off, though its loss spoiled the cape. It would never have done to let the minister's wife appear with the most elegant wrap in the congregation."

"But why?"

"Who can tell? There is always an unspoken feeling that the pastor is the head servant of the parish, and that his salary partakes a little of a gratuity. If it is a large salary, there are poor people in the congregation who do not earn nearly as much every year, yet they think they work harder than the minister, and if it is small the good housekeepers in the parish keep a watchful eye on the minister's wife for fear she will waste her husband's income. Either way, the manse is the centre of observation and is subject to that 'fierce light that beats upon a throne.' I remember that when I was fourteen I had a very pretty little frock of summer silk; it was simple and girlish, and a wee bit longer than any I had ever worn. One afternoon I wore it to make some calls, and returning at tea-time did not take it off. Afterwards in the twilight I sat at the piano playing a few little airs that I liked, and one of our neighbors, Mrs. Ketchum, came in without waiting to knock. In villages like ours at home friends are rather apt to do that, so I was not surprised when I turned round to see Mrs. Ketchum rocking herself by the window. I said, 'Good-evening.' She answered, 'Janet, you should be ashamed of yourself to keep your best dress on in the house. Go right away and take it off. Your mother has enough to do without having her children so careless.'"

"Fancy any one's being so impertinent," cried Eliza-

beth who had strolled in during the story. "What did you say?"

"I was fortunately saved from making some quick retort which would not have been excused by my critic, by mother's unfailing tact and presence of mind. She had heard Mrs. Ketchum's upraised voice and had hastened to the rescue. Poor mother always had her foot on the soft pedal with me.

"'Daughter,' she said, 'your father needs you upstairs; run away and help him.' Then she apologized to Mrs. Ketchum, apologized, mind you. 'It was my fault that Janet did not change her frock. I wanted to see it on her. I was afraid it might be a trifle too long,' and Mrs. Ketchum was mollified."

"All the same it was not her business to meddle."

"Certainly it was not and she would not have done so anywhere except in her minister's house."

"We have wandered away from the subject we were considering before Elizabeth appeared like a moonbeam, gliding in so quickly," said Nancy. "We were talking about the beautiful toilettes of Miss Prescott. Do you suppose that any one would regard them as out of character for her as a Christian woman?"

Elizabeth laughed. "A tulip might as well dress like a mushroom, or a rose refuse to wear satin and velvet and try to resemble a cabbage, as a woman like Evelyn Prescott attempt to be anything but herself. My way of looking at it is that even more than any one else, a Christian woman should be attractive in outward seeming. Miss Prescott influences many girls here who would not notice her if she were not fine in her carriage and smart in her dress. It takes

an immense amount of talent to dissipate the impression left by a slovenly garb and unkempt hair."

Janet looked at Elizabeth in wonder. She was growing; before coming here, she would not have expressed herself so clearly nor with so much thought on a subject that had nothing to do with her own experience.

When the others left, Elizabeth lingered.

"Janet," she said, "I miss you. I wish you and I were more together. But you do love me still, don't you?"

"Love you, Elizabeth? Of course I do."

"And you won't stop loving me even if I do things you don't approve of?"

"I won't stop loving you, dear, be sure of that, no matter what you may do."

"Well then, don't be shocked. I'm awfully tired of trying to be good, and hereafter I'm going to let myself go. It is your Miss Prescott who has laid the last straw on my pack. I went to one of her meetings to-day in a girl's room on our corridor and I decided that if I had to be a Christian after her pattern, I'd never have time to be anything else. I'd have to surrender too much. I've got back where I used to be last summer, and I'm a good deal more comfortable. I believe Miss Prescott wears a hair-cloth skirt under her silks and laces. She talks like a medieval nun. So, henceforth, Janet, you needn't count me in with prayer-meetings and such diversions; I've cut loose. Sure you love me notwithstanding?"

Elizabeth put her arm about Janet and kissed her cheek. Her ways were most winsome.

Janet's eyes were very sober. She returned the kiss with fervor.

"I love you just as dearly, Elizabeth. And God loves you just as dearly, which is better. You will not be contented to live in the valleys, when you've been on the heights."

"But you, Janet, are not what you were, awhile ago. You have told me this within a few days."

"Dear, I have found out my mistake, and Christ has helped me to come home again. He will not let you go, either. Good-night, dearest."

Barbara Maurice was writing home to her mother not long after. She freely poured out her thoughts to this best of confidantes.

"College is queer. There are all sorts and conditions of girls. Some have always had things and are used to them. Some have always wanted things and are afraid they can't get them. Some mean to have things and are straining after them. Here are girls from the South, from the West, the East, the North. There is a little brown Hindu girl in her native dress, and a graceful Japanese maiden in hers. It's confusing too, for evidently some of the professors do not believe the Bible quite as we do, who have come out of homes like mine, and yet I am quite sure that if we knew half as much as they do, we could understand them better. I don't mean to lose one grain of my faith in my dear Father in heaven, and I don't think any one here wants me to, but there are girls who are not so firmly fixed, and they are at sea.

"One of the girls, Janet Ward, has a father who is a home missionary in the mountains not very far from you. I want you and father to find him out.

From what Janet says, and from what she is, I'm sure her people are like our own folk. Mr. Ward has given up a very pleasant pastorate, I fancy, to do this hard work among the mountaineers, and Janet expects some time or other to help him. A few of the girls, few as compared with the great mass, are very devoted Christians. Some of the rest think these put on airs of goodness and are affronted. I don't think any one will ever say this of Janet, because she is the most natural girl I ever saw.

"I am afraid you'll think I don't study enough, mother, but I never could learn fast, and here I'm absorbing what I can. You won't mind if I seem like a dunce, will you? I'm pegging away at my piano practice, so tell father I'll play for him all he asks when I come home."

In the Tennessee home to which this letter went, there was a grand piano, standing on a pine floor, in a big bare parlor, where the rugs were of home manufacture and the walls were adorned with engravings in narrow black frames, and with two or three maps on a large scale. Barbara would modernize that home one of these days. Part of her training at college would be to show her how to make a charming interior in the great colonial homestead that stood superbly against a background of forest.

"I shall look up the Reverend Ward," said Mr. Maurice. "Bless our little girl. Play for her old dad, will she, when she comes home? I wish we had her at home now."

"I hope college won't send her home restless and dissatisfied, Bob." The little mother was a bit anxious on that score and not without reason.

"Restless? Our Barbara? Not she. Barbara has too much ballast for that. Don't worry, mother, over your little maid."

Meanwhile the Wards were fitting into their new niche as if they had been born there, fitting in perhaps all the better because of the novelty.

Mr. Ward's simple, genial cordiality joined to the reality of his childlike faith, won the reserved and somewhat shy people who did not wear the heart upon the sleeve. The boys took to the outdoor life, worked on the little farm, learned to shoot and be good marksmen, to ride, to drive, to fish and to swim. They had lessons with their father, which some other lads came in to share. When, stopping at a cabin half-way up a hill, and almost hidden from view by the dense thicket before the door, Mr. Ward found a lad of twelve, lying on the floor and working out an algebra lesson by the light of pine knots ablaze on the hearth, he was interested. The parents, people of a quiet dignity that surpassed a good deal that passes current for fine manners in fashionable society, were not learned. Mr. Ward fancied that the mother might perhaps not know how to read. But the boy was athirst to learn, and was diligently toiling without assistance over an old school book left in the house by a stranger who had once spent some months in the mountains, in search of health.

"Who has taught you, Harold?" naturally inquired the new minister.

"Nobody, sir. I've picked it out by myself. It's very easy when you get the key."

"I'd be proud to see a boy of mine working away so bravely," said Mr. Ward. "Now, look here,

bring your books to me, and study with my sons. They'll do better if they have other boys to help them. I'm glad I know algebra."

Here entered the swift pride of the mountaineer.

"I could no ways let him go, Mr. Ward, even to a preacher, if I couldn't pay for him," said the mother very firmly.

"You can pay," answered Mr. Ward at once. "I see you keep bees. My wife wants honey. I'll take my pay in that."

The bargain was made and Harold McRae henceforward had good teaching till the day arrived when he and Stuart Ward set out for the university. There were few lighter-hearted boys, though they started afoot and walked a three days' journey over steep and rough mountain roads to reach the goal.

Mrs. Ward was most touched by the early aging of the women. The young girls were often very beautiful, and always wearing a sunbonnet, their complexions wore the hue of the rose, and were of rose-leaf texture. But they married early, and soon entered on lives of drudgery, bearing and rearing large families, doing a great deal of hard and unrelieved housework, with no variety or amusement from the outside and few interests. The food was unwholesome, the houses inconvenient, the life solitary, so the women grew old fast. The rose-leaf skins grew faded and wrinkled, the elastic steps dragged, the shoulders bowed and the heads drooped.

"Have you noticed, David, that though these people are very hospitable, and though they press you to take meals with them, the mother hardly ever sits down with the family? It looks odd."

Mr. Ward assented.

"She hovers around the table pressing the preserves or the pickles on your notice. She isn't satisfied unless you eat all there is heaped on your plate, but she doesn't sit down herself. I don't believe these wives have the habit of eating with their husbands and children. They wait till the rest are fed, and then they take what is left. I can't get used to it."

"Well, dear," and Mr. Ward looked happily at the wife who had renewed her youth in the mountain air and the new scenes, although she too, had to work hard here, because of the difficulty of securing any one to help, "we must not interfere with the ways of the community. We must be very slow to make changes or to appear critical."

"Critical, dear husband! Never that! But wait till Janet's vacation comes. She and I will maybe organize a woman's club! That would stir them up."

VI

FUTURES

ORGANIZE a woman's club among the mountain women of Tennessee, women living in log cabins, riding to mill or to church with the ease of those who have been used to horses from the cradle, wearing sunbonnets and calico dresses all the week, with only the change to clean ones for Sunday; Mr. Ward thought it was hardly likely that the idea would be favorably received by any women in his scattered hill parish. Yet the day came when Janet and her mother made a very enthusiastic attempt at the impossible, and found obstacles not unsurmountable when attacked with faith and courage. But for that the story must wait, since it was not accomplished nor even begun in Janet's first vacation. Only the initiative was taken in some of the twilight talks between her and her mother, and the long afternoon tramps of Janet and her father.

College days pass more swiftly than the weaver's shuttle flies. To the freshman it is a far cry to the glory of the senior year, and the young women flitting about in the dignified cap and gown of the upper classes, are objects not of envy, but of admiration, while they appear remote as planets beyond the freshman's orbit.

The years do not stay their progress, and busy to

the uttermost, they slip imperceptibly by, each holding a brimming cup of hope and joy to the lips of girlhood. Imperceptibly too, yet surely and steadily the girls develop, so that it may safely be predicated of the senior whether or not she will be a woman worth following in the great world awaiting her. Those wise people, learned in girlhood's lore, who have grown used to discriminating between members of their classes, quietly select the ones who shall be heard from by and by; often the president and professors are much better acquainted with the daughters of Alma Mater after four years of daily intercourse than are the busy parents at home. A parent has always the ideal daughter in his mind, not always the real one; though of this fact, most of the uninitiated are disposed to be doubtful.

Janet bloomed into wonderful womanly beauty and stateliness during her four years at Lucas. She owed little to dress, for she absolutely refused to let Elizabeth's mother keep on sending her presents, and her Aunt Katherine was so incensed at what she termed the wild-goose chase of the family to the south, that for awhile her benefactions ceased. But Janet was helping herself. She wrote a little for the weekly papers with varying results. Lots of her "stuff" as she called it came flying swiftly back as Noah's dove to the ark, having found no resting-place. How Janet hated the very look of those politely worded billets in which editors suavely thanked her for the pleasure they had had in reading her stories, while regretting that they could not print them. She invariably tore these notes into the most minute fragments and vindictively threw them into her waste-

basket. After awhile she learned to care little for a single rebuff, and having tried one paper in vain, she sent her manuscript adrift again, quite sure that in the end it would find its niche, if it were worth anything. Of course she could write merely in the intervals of her time, and she had not determined on a literary career in her most confident moments, very few of her friends knowing that she was inclined that way at all. When the little clean bits of paper that meant translation into crisp bills at the bank, came along, Janet was a happy girl, and she was able, somehow, to manage without many calls on the pocketbook in the manse. It was marvellous how well she did manage. If writing gave out, or the flow of ideas stopped, she undertook work in quite another department of money-making effort.

There are always girls who are willing to pay anybody who will replace braids on frayed skirts, sew on buttons, and shampoo hair. A girl who can make dainty stocks is sure of customers. A girl who can copy out notes in a plain hand shall find employers. Miss Ward from Springdale could act as a general utility woman on occasion, and her services were so pleasantly given that they were popular. A girl never loses caste in college by undertaking any honest work from shoe polishing to authorship. Janet's versatility was much prized, and she had fun out of her struggles.

So the years flitted. Janet as a senior was the most marked girl in her class, not the most brilliant or the most ready, but the one noted everywhere for strength and character. And she kept her childlike sweetness and humility inviolate all through.

The favorite professor, adored by successive generations of girls, and influential in her world as few people ever are, sent for Janet one day. To be summoned by Miss Kenyon to a private conference was an honor and a privilege. Elizabeth and Nancy wondered what Miss Kenyon could want. Janet herself was excited and pleased, and walked down the long pathway between the elms, with her head in the air and her mind full of dreams. Perhaps there was something she could do to help "Queen Katherine" as the girls called Miss Kenyon.

The lady was seated in a pleasant room, long and low, and filled with books. Engravings and photographs, rare curios from Japan and India, and beautiful bits of glass and china, made the room very charming. Its mistress, a small dark woman with a piquant face that had won the confidence of many a pupil and assured her of sympathy in any hour of need, rose to welcome Janet when she entered.

"You were kind to come so promptly, my dear. I wish to talk over the future, yours if I may. We are all interested in our most faithful students, of whom you are one. What was your purpose when you came to Lucas, Miss Ward? Was it very definite?"

"To make the most of my time, so that I might somehow help my father out with the boys. We are poor, Miss Kenyon, poorer now than when I entered college, Father having gone into the Home Mission field."

"Precisely, I know that. Now, there come to us from time to time applications for our graduates, and it is as well for them and for us, to be ready for

whatever may open. Do you think you would like to teach next year?"

Janet's answer was very emphatic. She made a little face of distress.

"No indeed, Miss Kenyon, not I. I am sure that teaching will never be my work. I did try it the summer before I came to college and was moderately successful in a little district school in the country, but I have learned how little I know, and I would rather put my talents, such as they are, into some other field. Just what that may be, I don't yet see clearly."

"It will be revealed to you in due time," said Miss Kenyon. "One must wait for leadings, but one must also be prepared for whatever beckons her. I have been looking over your essays and verses, and I think you might take up some form of literary work. Why not write? You have written a little, I happen to know."

"Miss Kenyon," Janet's face flushed and her eyes sparkled, "nothing would be so delightful, nothing so splendid; but I lack creative genius. I have not much imagination. It would hardly be worth while for me, seriously, to attempt novels and romances; and I cannot sit still and wait for money. When I leave college, I must at once plunge in and become self-supporting. In other words, I'll immediately be in need of a steady job."

Miss Kenyon smiled. "I see," she said. "But you are very young, and let me tell you, my dear, nobody can write a successful romance unless she has lived it first, or has had sufficient knowledge of life, in its sorrows and sufferings, to understand the struggles

of others. The great exceptions such as Charlotte Bronte, for instance, only prove the rule. I was thinking of something far less ambitious; why not become a journalist? There is plenty of opportunity in the cities for the young newspaper woman, and as you have diligence, conscience, and a good incisive style, joined to an eye quick to observe, I think there will be your rôle. If not and you will change your mind, I can place you at once in an academy in the south, not two hundred miles from your home, where you may begin teaching, at a fair salary. I am really offering you the position before I have spoken to any one else."

"How very good you are, and how much I thank you, Miss Kenyon."

Janet was silent for a few minutes, then she rose.

"May I think the situation over and take time to write to my parents before I decide?"

"Yes, you may have one week," said Miss Kenyon.

"Please think soberly; don't be impulsive."

Janet told Nancy all about it before bedtime. She wished Miss Prescott were there, to be consulted; the girls felt that her judgment was almost infallible, but she fancied Miss Prescott might be somewhere across the continent. Nothing had lately been heard from her. Nancy favored the bold plan of going at once into the arena of journalism.

"Father will hate to have me become a reporter," said Janet, "and mother will dread my going to a big city alone. They are sure to veto the whole proceeding. It's hardly worth while to consult them. I can hear dear mother's voice and see her face of recoil at the bare suggestion. The teacher's work

will impress her agreeably, for she knows about that and it will seem to her safe and respectable work for a lady."

"What is it that is work for a lady?" asked a familiar voice. "I tapped twice at the door, but you girls were so engaged in your discussion that you did not hear me, so I just walked in."

"Miss Prescott! You darling! You love! where did you fall from? Out of the sky just when I wanted you most?" cried Janet rapturously.

"Not out of the sky, but out of a hospital near Boston," answered Miss Prescott. "I never took my western trip. I've been ill, and am only in shape to begin work again now. I was going to Denver last Thursday, but was hindered and obliged to remain over Sunday, and then, an invisible threat of attraction, very strong and fine, drew me here. I just determined to take the Lucas girls by surprise, and this explains me. Is my arrival convenient? Can you put me up anywhere?"

"You shall have my room, and I'll slip in with Nancy. But you must rest and have something to eat. Sit right down and take off your wraps."

Janet was not now in the boarding-house which had been her first domicile. For eighteen months she had had a room in one of the homes on the campus, with a certain responsibility as to the order and pleasure of the household, so that though not cumbered with domestic cares, she was chief aid to the house-mother, and thus lessened her own expenses. Nancy too, who had been making a fair income from her drawings, was there, and Elizabeth Evans was a stone's throw away, in the same quar-

ters which she had entered in her freshman year. The trio were in close touch at this period.

"We will defer our chat till to-morrow morning, and now I will go and forage and get you a luncheon before you retire, and meanwhile Nancy shall make over the bed for you, so that you can sleep in peace, Miss Prescott."

The bed, on which Nancy was then sitting, was by day a divan, but with a few deft touches and the addition of a pillow brought from a closet, it was transformed, and everything was presently arranged for the guest's comfort.

"I am so glad Miss Prescott is here," said Janet. "The more I think of it, the surer I feel that my best way will be to settle this question for myself, and tell father and mother about it when I am with them in vacation. If once a course is resolved upon, they will not see the lions in the way so very plainly."

"If you do go to New York, Janet," said Nancy, "you and I can be together."

"Of course, and very likely Barbara too. She is going there to study music for a year or two."

Miss Prescott, left alone in Janet's room, did not immediately retire. She was just enough older than the world of girls around her, to appreciate their restlessness, to feel with them the incoming of the great tides of life. Not so long ago she had stood where they were now, and her whole heart was set on serving them. It was part of her life to pray, and she very simply committed this visit to Lucas and Janet Ward, to her Father above, before she laid her head on the pillow.

In the morning she came quietly into the breakfast-

room and the whole house, fifty girls, rose to greet her. The ripple of pleasure ran round the tables. It was evident that whoever might be welcome at Lucas, few could surpass Miss Prescott in being royally so. She had beyond most women the gift of tact. She knew when to speak and when to be silent. Not invariably were visiting secretaries cordially received by college faculties; some were too emotional, some disregarded college regulations, some allowed their meetings to trench upon time sacred to study, but Miss Prescott did nothing of this sort. She was discretion itself; prudence, piety and charity, Elizabeth declared, were in Miss Prescott's person rolled into one modern young woman.

"My firm belief, Janet, is," she averred, in the subsequent talk which came after Janet's German class next day, "that you must consult the dear people at the manse, before you go to such a place as New York. I feel that you owe them a twelvemonth at home if they want you. They have given up a big slice of their only daughter's youth, and I'm not sure that you won't get your bearings best, by being awhile out of the crowd. Life here is life in a crowd as you are well aware."

"But, Miss Prescott, I ought to be earning money without any delay."

"Every girl feels that, and few girls can wait, yet there may be no more immanent occasion for your earning, next autumn, than there is at this moment. Do let your mother have you a wee while, dearest. I would tell Miss Kenyon at once that you are out of the running for the academy. Then she'll choose Ellen Radford, or Margaret Dunn, who each wish to

teach, and who are both far better fitted for teaching than you are likely to be."

So it was settled. Miss Prescott had her confab with Nancy, too, but Nancy never needed outside counsel. She was strong as a tree that is rooted deep in the soil and toughened by rough tussles with the storm. Nancy had nobody who must be deferred to; she did as she liked, yet kept through it all a womanly gentleness, never rudely aggressive, though singularly free from timidity.

"Nancy Wiburn will be an artist, in what line I don't know," Miss Kenyon said to Miss Prescott. "She is an interesting study, and the more so, that she is so free from self-consciousness. Now there's an instance for you of nothing coming from heredity."

"I'm not so certain and neither can you be, I fancy. We cannot trace her ancestry, but she must have good blood. I like to think that through Nancy's desolate childhood, there were those in heaven who kept a loving watch over her, and who are watching over her now in her young womanhood. Don't you think that her mother may be permitted to care for her orphan child, Miss Kenyon?"

"God knows, my dear, I don't. My stumbling-block is this: if a mother were guarding her, why need she have had so much to suffer, to endure?"

"Ah, my friend, God's years are not as ours, nor His plans like yours and mine. If He chose to lift Nancy, a pure lily from the scum of the earth, He could do it. If He chose to let her grow as a transplanted rose, out of one of His fairest gardens, to bloom by the wayside, He could do that. Anyhow, here is Nancy and here is Janet, and two lovelier

girls, who are more different one from the other, I don't believe you will ever find."

"Now here," cried a laughing girl interrupting the conversation of her betters, as she came in bringing Miss Prescott a new book, and Miss Kenyon, a bouquet, "here is Elizabeth. Poor Elizabeth, whom you haven't had a word for this whole week, Miss Kenyon. And Miss Prescott doesn't bother much about Elizabeth either."

"Elizabeth is one of those exceedingly satisfactory people whom one never worries about, and whom one is quite sure of finding in the right place whenever she looks for her," and Miss Prescott smiled as she gave this verdict.

"Elizabeth, what are you going to be?" said Miss Kenyon, curiously. "You have made no plans yet, have you, child? You never seem anxious."

"Why yes, Miss Kenyon, I have my dreams, but my plans are simple. I shall be Elizabeth Evans of Dene's Mills for a while. I may marry. I always supposed I'd marry my far away cousin, Tom Evans, but that's off. We do not care for one another in the least, any more, and now I'm hoping Tom will fall in love with Janet. I'm going to be an everyday woman with no end of fun, and no end of a good time, and I'll do my duty if I can, in that station to which it has pleased the good Lord to call me."

So light-hearted Elizabeth went merrily on her way. Little did she forecast the years that were to be, nor all that might befall her. As she disappeared the two older women gazed wistfully after her, and Miss Kenyon said, "She represents a type that is the saving salt of our society. The home-keeping,

home-making conservative woman, who does not aspire to a career, who is content with her old-fashioned heritage of love and peace, and who does not so much as hear the echoes of the strife and contention abroad in the earth."

"Elizabeth was born to wealth."

"That does not account for it. Rich girls are as restless as poor girls, as bent on independence, as ardent to be up and doing. An eager desire to work is in the atmosphere. It is electric with intention. Numbers of our girls are growing indifferent to marriage and are harder to please with husbands than ever. The age when girls marry is ever pushing farther on. Why, my mother was a bride at eighteen, and at twenty-four her contemporaries if unmarried were spinsters. You and I are spinsters, but we don't mind. Our predecessors did. They were secretly ashamed to be called old maids. And the young wives had so many babies. Now one child or at most two are enough. If one have four or five it is an amazement in her circle. The royal families of Europe and the people on the east side of New York and the south side of Chicago, have crowds of little ones, but ordinary, comfortable, middle class Americans do not, nor is childlessness pitied any longer. I often fear that college life for women has its seamy side."

Miss Prescott was silent. She saw another phase of the question and presently presented it.

The two ladies discussed the problem awhile, Miss Prescott holding that the gains of a liberal education more than balanced the losses; though in individual cases there might be failure, on the whole, she thought women were broader, better fitted for home

life and more self-controlled, than before they had so extended an intellectual discipline. Miss Kenyon, who dearly loved an argument for its own sake, somewhat whimsically maintained the opposite side, until a warning bell brought their interview to a close.

"My belief is," said Miss Kenyon as they separated, "that we are still in the phase of ferment and that another decade or two will bring great changes for the better. When I was a student, I won't say how long ago, but as the daughters of my old classmates will be graduated this summer, you may fancy it as a good bit out of a lifetime, the college girl was very self-conscious. There were not so many of her: she was pointed out as a young woman of advanced ideas; she understood that she was doing something rather conspicuous and ambitious. Some people called her mannish because she timidly ventured into the realm of athletics and at the same time studied Greek. She knocked in vain at the doors of European universities. Berlin professors refused to consider her applications for entrance on their lectures. All that has passed or is passing! There's that bell again. Good-bye, Miss Prescott."

VII

IN A TENNESSEE MANSE

“**C**OME, mother dear, and see how you like the effect.”

“Yes, my child, in a minute. I can’t leave this bread till it’s done. One of these days, Chloe will be able to make the bread, and then I’ll be freer.”

Black Chloe giggled, and said, “Yas’m.” Heretofore Chloe’s efforts at cooking had resulted so badly, that Mrs. Ward preferred doing the work herself, to having good material spoiled. Chloe was much better than nobody, and Janet had vague ideas of training her into a perfect handmaid, but thus far they had not been transmuted into the practical. Janet and her brothers were fixing up a room for her at the top of the house, a regular sky parlor. They had painted it, papered the walls, and made it clean and wholesome with the eight windows open to the fresh mountain winds. A few shelves had been put up and here were the girl’s school books, her copy of Stevenson’s *Child’s Garden of Verse* and *Virginibus Puerisque*, her Browning and Tennyson, her Virgil and Homer. A low white bed, curtains of sheer muslin looped with blue, and a blue Japanese rug on the floor, gave the room something of the air that Janet’s old chamber at Springdale had worn. The mother climbed the steep little stair, and looked pale

as she sat down in Janet's low rocker. Instantly Janet was at her side, anxious and tender.

"Dear mother, does that little stairway tire you so much? I am sorry, mother, you are working beyond your strength. I'll take the reins for awhile. Do let me."

"If you do the housekeeping, Janet, you'll have no time to write or read or keep on with your studies as you've been planning. As Chloe says, there's a heap to do in this family."

"Never mind, I'll do it. You must rest. We'll begin this very day. Now, mother, lie down on my divan and let me cover you up. You take a nap. I'll get the dinner. You needn't worry. I know how."

"To be sure she does," said Mr. Ward, who had followed in the wake of his wife and was standing in the doorway. "Run down, Janet, and entertain that good lady who is stopping at the gate, until I come. Tell her your mother's engaged just now."

"Not for the world, Janet. She wouldn't understand," cried the mother.

"I'll manage it, dear."

The daughter of the manse felt her foot once more on her native heath. Truth to tell, since she had settled down at home, college and its absorbing routine in the background, Janet had not been altogether contented. Everybody knows the flat taste of a life that is without the savor of congenial occupation. Few young women graduating from college are able to go on alone at home with the work they found so easy when it was done under the daily pressure of recitations and lectures, and in the com-

pany of others equally interested. The life that has no flavor, which of us cannot recall it, which of us has not had some acquaintance with its dullness? Mr. Ward had been quick to note that Janet chafed under the inaction of her home life, and that she would not long be able to endure it. The needlework of which she used to be fond, did not please her, now, and she found her chief distraction in sending off endless letters to her old schoolmates, and in reading the new books that from time to time came to her by mail from Elizabeth Evans. Janet was the victim of reaction. Her father recognized the symptoms.

"You couldn't do a better thing for her, dearest," he said, "than to let Janet nurse you up and relieve you for awhile. I have an idea. Give her full swing, and when you feel a little stronger, go to Philadelphia and pay one of the aunties a visit."

"David! how could I be spared?"

"Of course you'll be missed, but I'm going to spare you this year, and lift the heft of the load myself. When you come back, well and cheery, and your old self, then our girlie may make plans."

The wife's eyes filled with tears. She had been battling her old demon till she was exhausted. She did need change. She was almost beaten down. And her husband was not blind. He prized her too much to let her drift out so far on the outward wave of illness, physical and mental, that he could never call her back.

"You take things easy," he said, "I'll put this screen between your eyes and the light. Sleep awhile, and when you awaken, read this little story

book, if you want to. I'll hurry down now and help Janet with old Mrs. Grimstead."

The mother was waited upon most lovingly that day. Janet's room was in itself a change for her, and when luncheon was ready, her husband brought it up, arranged on a tray, with a delicate daintiness that coaxed her to try the food; she had lately had no appetite.

On Janet's part, when she had housework to do, she discovered that it was exacting. Her young strength should have made light of it, but her feet ached with standing and her back with bending, before the day was done. Chloe could fetch and carry, but she was clumsy and irresponsible, and sorely taxed Janet's patience. Late in the afternoon, her father urged her to go with him up the mountain a piece, and she felt almost too weary to say yes, but when had she denied dad; she went.

They seated themselves on the green grass midway up a hillside, and Mr. Ward pointed to a cabin a little farther on.

"There is a woman in there, Janet, who needs your friendship. She is standing in the doorway now. Mrs. Nelson, Tim Nelson's wife. In the whole world, daughter dear, there's not another woman I'm so sorry for."

Janet saw outlined against the evening sky, a picture she never forgot. Mrs. Nelson, tall, statuesque in her blue cotton gown, that hung in straight folds to her feet, held in her arms a child two years old. The pose, the motherliness and the grace, might have made her a model for a Madonna. She stood in her door, her whole figure queenly, and in no line

of it was there as yet, the droop and depression too often seen in the mountain women after marriage and child-birth. A man came out of the cabin roughly elbowing his wife aside; the child held out dimpled arms calling "Popsie, Popsie," but the father took no notice. Through the clear silence of the evening, sounds carried far. Mr. Ward and Janet felt themselves eavesdroppers, but they could not move without being seen, and they did not care to be revealed after they heard what followed.

"Tim dear, won't you bring me a bucket of water from the spring before you go, please dear?" The wife spoke humbly, pleadingly. She put down the child, and handed the man a pail. The child toddled along, and plucked at its father's coat. The man lifted it, tossed it up, kissed it.

"At any rate, Tim cares for his boy," said Mr. Ward, with a sigh. "It's the only sign of humanity I've ever seen in that miserable wretch."

"He's not ill-looking, dad!" They both spoke almost in whispers.

"A fine animal, Janet, but brutal. You're not near enough to see, but that jaw is cruel, and the eyes are too close together. What she ever saw in him, heaven only knows."

"Tim," called the wife, "I am not really well, dear; please don't stay long and please bring me the water. Won't you, honey?"

"Bring it yourself, Belle, and don't ask me to tote buckets up hill. What do you take me for? You seem to think I've nothing to do but dance round and wait on a lazy good-for-nothing woman that spends her time reading books and crying in the corner.

I've spoiled you enough. I'll come back when I'm ready. See that you take good care of the kid, Belle. I'll kick the bucket down hill for you. So long."

Suiting the action to the word, he lifted his heavy boot and gave the pail a kick. It went flying down hill. The fellow slouched away past the minister and his daughter, whom he did not perceive in the dimming shadows of the wood path.

"My hands ache to thrash that man as he deserves," said Mr. Ward. "The big cowardly brute; and that woman's tied to him for life. Oh, what fools girls sometimes are! Poor Belle Nelson. Tim's been drinking enough to make him ugly. He has periodical sprees when he's as dangerous as a mad bull. In between, for a month or two, he's not so ferocious as to-night, but he's always a booby and a boor. I've heard that he ill-reats his wife, and I'm sure it's true."

Janet looked sorrowfully at the cabin. Mrs. Nelson had gone in and shut the door. Presently, she came out, walked wearily down the hill and was evidently going for the pail of water she needed. Mr. Ward was on his feet in an instant. Janet divined his intention and laid an arresting hand on his arm.

"No, daddy, you mustn't go for it. She'd know that we had seen and heard too much. It would mortify her dreadfully. We must slip away home while she is out of sight round the shoulder of the hill."

"She has a story, dad?" Janet asked the question later. Her father mused awhile and then said,

"Yes, dear, a very pitiful story. She's a well-born, well-bred, well-educated woman, a college graduate, and a girl related by kinship to half the finest people in southern Tennessee. And she's mated with a clown, and worse, with a drunkard."

"What was her name before she married?"

"Violet Belle Turner."

"Any relation to Bishop Turner?"

"His own niece, dear."

"Can her people do nothing for her?"

"They have cast her off. But they could do little for her after she had married Timothy Nelson. There was little left to do, precious little."

"How did it all happen, daddy?"

"Well, the story's not a brief one. But I can tell it briefly. Belle Turner came back from college with her head full of half digested socialistic ideas, and her heart estranged from God. Then she found home rather uninteresting, and she did not care for society, though her birth and her beauty entitled her to enter it and shine in any company. Her father had some work to be done around the place, and employed a young man from the mountains as gardener. The youth was big boned, strong, handsome, carried himself rather well, and was then deferential enough in his manner to the daughter of the house. They were a good deal together; her mother was dead, her father often absent. So far as I know the only person who was worried or who ventured to remonstrate with Belle, who was headstrong and high spirited, was her old colored mammy. *She* was scornful enough of the pore white trash, but Belle either laughed at or flouted her entreaties.

“One day a bombshell exploded at Mr. Seth Turner’s feet. His gardener, cap in hand, waited on him in his office, and asked permission to marry his daughter. Naturally it was scornfully refused, and the man ordered off the place. There was a stormy scene with Belle, and she was sent away to an aunt’s in a desolate place, forty miles away. The choice of place was an error on Mr. Turner’s part. The aunt treated Belle as if she were in disgrace, kept her, metaphorically, on bread and water. Three months afterwards, in the dusk, a cart drove to the door, the lover appeared with a license, and the infatuated girl went away with him, and they were married. And Belle’s been living on bread and water ever since.”

“I shall go to see her, father.”

“Do, my darling, very soon.”

Janet made an early opportunity to go for a call on Mrs. Nelson. Her father thought it would be a good time to choose when Tim was absent, and he ascertained that a hunting expedition had taken him away for some days. In common with other half-civilized people, Tim was always ready for an excursion which promised him personal pleasure; it is only the man in a high state of civilization who cares for others’ pleasure than his own. When he set off the baby was ailing, but though he professed great fondness for the “kid,” the father would not deny himself the indulgence of a tramp in the woods, and a few days’ camping with kindred spirits that he might help his wife take care of her child.

“You must think of some reason for stopping at Mrs. Nelson’s cabin, Janet,” said her mother. “She

must not suspect that you are inquisitive nor will she accept your pity. Can't you go up on some housekeeping errand or other, and casually begin an acquaintance which may be pleasant for you both?"

While Janet was trying to create some occasion for a neighborly foray on Mrs. Nelson's premises, Mr. Ward hurried in, impetuous as ever. He made short work of the tactful and diplomatic approaches of the ladies, for within the hour he had met his friend, the doctor, and had learned that the little one was ill with fever.

"Belle Nelson ought not to be alone on the mountainside with a delirious child, and it would be only sisterly, dear, for you to go right in and help her nurse the little one. You wouldn't be knocked up with one night's watching, would you, Janet?"

"No, indeed." Janet's tone was cheerful, and she sprang up alert. She was ready to go that instant. Mrs. Ward restrained her.

"You two do everything in such dead earnest, and in such a hurry, I can never get used to it. Janet, I am glad to let you go, but first you must have a comfortable hot supper. Then take off your tight fitting gown and leave your corsets at home. Carry a warm soft dressing sacque with you and your slippers. Nights grow chilly towards morning. Father or Hughie will walk through the clearing with you, and you are not to come home until broad daylight. Mother knows best about such things, daughter."

"Here I am leaving you, sweetness, just when you need me. It isn't right."

"Yes it is. You go, dear; I've had a splendid rest

to-day, and everybody'll take care of me, but that poor soul is all by herself, and weighted with a heavy heart besides."

Janet never forgot the picture she saw when she opened the cabin door and walked in that evening. The mother was bending over her child; the child was in a stupor from which he awoke with starts and wild cries, calling in heart piercing tones, "Far to go! far to go! far to go!" Where did he think he must go, and what phantasy whirled through his brain? The mother had little skill in nursing, and she was at her wit's end. She seemed not at all surprised when Janet without a word of preface came to her side saying, "This child must have a cold bath. I will give him one, I know how."

The mother glanced up and saw the minister's daughter. She did not speak, but she did as she was told, and helped Janet wring out sheets and wrap the hot and moaning sufferer in their cool folds. Again and again the water was applied, till the dry skin grew moist, and the limbs relaxed, till blessed sleep came to the child's relief.

"He'll be easier now. Lie down yourself. Here, let me put this pillow under your head, and tuck you under the quilt." Janet spoke caressingly; she felt so sorry for the poor tired woman with the pallid cheeks and the eyes so shadowed by anxiety.

"I am all right, Miss Ward. You must not worry about me. You have been so very kind. What should Donald and I have done without you? My husband is away, and it is lonesome here; there are no near neighbors."

"Unless you count us, as I hope you will. You

know what the Bible says, 'Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother that is far off.'"

Even as she spoke, Janet saw the other's lids droop from fatigue, and against her will she lay down on the side of the bed. Janet shaded the lamp that its rays might not fall on her sleeping face.

Never did Janet forget that vigil. Save for the wild cry of the whip-poor-will now and then piercing the stillness, the silence of the night was unbroken. Darkness enfolded the little cabin home, shadows wrapping it round as they wrap the lair and the nest. The girl went to the door and drew in deep breaths of the fresh spicy air scented with the sweetness of the forest. Overhead were the stars. Beneath her, half a mile away, was the manse. She saw a light gleaming faintly through the trees, and knew that her father was still in his study reading and praying.

She closed the door and sat down in a splint bottomed chair besides the hearth, where glowed the embers of a fire. The room was full of contrasts. Across the ceiling overhead were strings of red peppers, and a ham hung from a nail. The household utensils, spoons, pails, and tubs, were grouped in a corner, and a dishpan burnished brightly, shone like a shield against the wall. But the feature that drew and kept Janet's attention was strikingly different from these homely and familiar objects. When Mrs. Nelson had left her home, her father had packed up and sent her the pictures and books which were hers, in her girlhood's home. On one side of the room were pictures that betokened travel and luxury. A Madonna of Raphael smiled down on the poor mother and child below

her serene face, and there were shelves filled with poetry and romance. Janet tiptoed over to read their titles in the obscurity of the shaded lamp, and the books were like her own, they were the open sesame to a wider world than that which hemmed in the untutored and the ignorant. She who possessed these was mistress of a treasure store of which drudgery could not rob her, nor misery wholly mar.

The hours wore slowly away. By and by the dawn quickened in the East. The sun rose grandly over the hills. Still the mother and her boy rested quietly, and Janet, looking at them with loving eyes, thanked God for a new day.

VIII

BELLE NELSON'S STORY

IT was not long before the little mother was comfortably fitted out for her journey, and started off; her husband going with her part of the way. In the meantime, Janet continued her visits to the Nelsons, and before long had found much to love in Belle. They were nearly of an age, Mrs. Nelson having completed her school course when Janet was a freshman, and as Tim's absences grew longer and more frequent, there was plenty of opportunity for Janet to relieve the loneliness of the young wife. The child soon recovered, and his sturdy little frame was no worse for his attack, but Janet was pained to see the difficulties under which his mother labored in trying to bring him up. When Belle insisted on politeness and taught him to behave as a well-bred child should, his father was ready with a sneer, and openly declared that he would not have the kid made to put on foolish airs. Belle bore everything with great patience, but she flamed up one day when, in Janet's presence the father tried to teach his boy a profane word. Janet endeavored to so time her calls that she should not encounter Tim, but this could not always be managed. He actually took a perverse pleasure in humiliating his wife before people. A hard, coarse man, he liked to break

her pride, and it gave him satisfaction to wound her when there was a spectator as on this occasion.

"Donald must not say that, Tim!" Belle faced him, speaking firmly.

"Say it, boy! Say it for pappy!"

The father had the little fellow on his knee. "Pappy'll give you a new knife, if you say it right out. You'll never be a man 'less you know some cuss-words! Say what I tell you, Donald!"

"Donald!" The mother stretched out her arms. "Donald, mother says no. God won't be pleased, Donald! Come right to mother."

Tears trembled in the boy's blue eyes. He wanted the knife. Baby as he was, the spirit of a man was in him, and never yet was a man that didn't desire a weapon. But his mother's rule was the stronger. He struggled down from his father's lap, and ran to his mother, hiding his face in the folds of her skirt.

"Never mind, young man!" cried Tim. "When you're bigger, I'll whip you good, if you don't mind *me*. I've a mind to do it now!"

At this, Belle's self-control gave way.

"Tim Nelson," she cried, "you've gone far enough. Neither now, nor ever will you lay a finger on this child to make him do wrong. God will surely punish you for this badness."

Janet had not meant to be a witness to this scene. She had come over to learn from Belle the secret of a certain dish, and had not known how to get away. Her horrified countenance suddenly impressed Tim, as his wife's remonstrance had no power to do, and he reached for his hat, and stepped to the door, only to be surprised there by a much more disconcerting

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presence, that of his mother. "Thank heaven!" whispered Belle fervently.

If there was in the wide world a person of whom Tim stood in awe, it was she who now blocked his passage from the house. She was a tall woman, dark-eyed and sombre, with the melancholy of the mountains in her weather-beaten face. Her sunbonnet fell back from her gray hair; her cotton gown was short, revealing heavy shoes, but there was dignity and courage in every line of her figure.

"Mornin', Tim," she said shortly. "Howdy, Belle, howdy, Miss Ward. I've come to stay a spell, anyhow till after Sunday. I'm starving for a sermon, and they tell me Parson Ward does know how to preach the straight old gospel. Heard him yet, Tim?"

"No, mother, I don't trouble preachers much."

"More shame to you! But you've been, Belle?"

"No, mother, I can't go alone!"

"Well, honey, you can go with me, I'm sure! Tim, that place out there needs diggin' up, and you better get to work quick! Leave your gun back in the house, son, you don't need to hunt all the time, and your garden is in bad shape. Begin fixing it, somehow, for next year."

Tim obeyed. From childhood he had obeyed this imperious woman, and he did so still.

From her pocket old Mrs. Nelson took a short, black clay pipe, and filled it with tobacco; lighting it and sitting down by the stove, she puffed away with great enjoyment. Presently, she said,

"Belle, did you know that folks from down below are staying at the inn? They've got one of those

stages they call a tally-ho, and are drivin' all around the country. Any day they may pass here, an' stop. I reckon your cousins from home are with the party, from something my old man heerd last market day!"

Belle's face did not alter a line.

"They won't stop here, mother."

"They might, Miss Alice Kensett is with them. So father heard. And she'd stop, wouldn't she?"

"Oh, I hope not. I hope not."

Alice Kensett had been Belle's most intimate friend and chum in the days when she was in her girlish place of queenly ease and state.

"And Theodore Fuller, and Elmer Yancey, and a whole lot of the ones you used to know."

"They're nothing to me now, mother. Nothing! I have my husband and my boy, and the baby that is coming. My world is here."

"You're a good woman, Belle, and you're tied fast to a shiftless, ornery, ill-to-do man, that's been a trial ever since he was born. I that ought to know best, say it. Pore Tim never had anything but good looks to commend him. He takes after the Indian streak that is in the family, the only one that does. Well, I didn't mean to say that before a stranger."

"You didn't, mother. I'd have stopped you. Miss Janet slipped away out of the back door, a few minutes ago, and she's half way home now. Mother, she's a dear comforter, that girl."

"She looks sort of peart, like a flower in the hedge. Well, Belle Nelson, I'm here now. You go away by yourself as you like to, and walk in the woods, and I'll look after Tim and the baby, and get the dinner. You go and rest a spell."

Belle hesitated, but she was over-tired, and she could rely on the friendship of this big-hearted mother-in-law who had stalked with her long, masculine tread, three miles over the mountain to give her a lift. She took the path down the hill, and reached the manse soon after Janet. Truth to tell, she did not care to encounter the merry party of her old friends and comrades who were taking a drive, stopping here and there at a country hotel, and junketing as she had once done, oh! ages and ages ago, it seemed, with many of the same party. Alice Kensett had been her roommate at school, was still her defender and correspondent, but had not had a glimpse of her home. Elmer Yancey had wanted to marry her, and Theodore Fuller was her brother Jack's chum at college. Elmer was a prosperous banker. Alice was his fiancée; Theodore was studying for the ministry. They all belonged in a sphere from which Belle Nelson had forever exiled herself, by an act of folly and rashness, and of contempt for filial authority. Against her will, Tennyson's bitter lines repeated themselves in the back of her mind,

"Yet it shall be, thou shalt lower to his level day by day.
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.
As the husband is, the wife is, thou art mated with a clown.
And the grossness of his nature, will have weight to drag thee
down."

She loathed herself for her disloyalty, but when disillusion comes, and the eyes are unsealed, and a woman finds out that what she adored has not only degenerated, but never existed, there waits for her a

dreary time of anguish. She has sold her birthright, and there remains for her henceforth no place for return and reinstatement; repentance of the bitterest, indeed, she may know. To one pillar Belle clung with both hands, the pillar of fidelity. No vow of hers should be broken. She might die, but she would not be untrue. There was good stuff in Belle.

Down the steep pathway she wandered, turning aside into a certain nook that had become to her as her closet into which she might enter, and where God shut the door. She passed around behind a great branching oak, and there was a wide cleared space rimmed about with giant trees; the grass was soft as turf, her foot sunk into its velvet cushiony carpet. No human eye could see her there. No human ear hear her. She was all by herself. She knelt down, pressed her head against the rough bark of a tree, and her breast shaken with sobs, poured out her soul in half uttered words. God knew how tired she was; God knew how desperate; God knew how helpless. But for Donald's sake, she would gladly have laid down life and its load. But, she had him, and even as she knelt, the motherhood in her was thrilled by the stir within her of the unborn child, Tim's child and hers! Suddenly there swept across her nature, as if a flood had come from an unknown sea, a new feeling, a diviner emotion than Belle Nelson had known before. Up to this hour self-pity had been predominant in her mind. Whence it came, she knew not; this breath of something loftier, tenderer and more compassionate, but she rose from her prayer, comforted, and sorry for Tim! Sorry for her husband! With a flash of the clearest

insight she perceived that if she were out of her right orbit, so was he. "It is not so much he who drags me down, as I, that cannot raise him up. Oh! Christ, if Thou could'st! Is there anything too hard for Thee? I am a sinful woman, O Lord," she spoke audibly though not much above a whisper, as she walked on beneath the trees, strangely calmed and comforted. "I am a sinful woman, for I have been proud and rebellious against Thee, and I have despised my husband. God forgive me, God help me!" So speaking aloud to God, she went on, till she reached the little vine-covered porch of the manse. Janet came to meet her, but Belle preoccupied scarcely returned the delighted affectionate greeting.

"I have not come to see you, dear. Is the minister at home? I want to talk with him."

"Yes, father is in his study!"

"Please, Janet, take me to your father."

The Protestant minister has no confessional, but there is not a faithful man of God in all its borders, who does not sometimes listen to the pent-up sadness of half-broken hearts, when that sadness can no longer be confined. David Ward was no novice in the task of advising and consoling, teaching and strengthening those who were ready to perish. To Belle Nelson that day he unfolded, as she had never before known it, the infinite grace, the unfathomed mercy of Him who trod the way to Golgotha bearing His cross, and who died on that cross for man's redemption. He read to her from the Master's words of heavenly love, he commended her to that Master, as a man talks with his friend, and when she left the study, her face was transfigured. Janet looked at

her in amazement. Belle had fought a good fight that day, and had gained the victory. Her face was illumined with a very glory of peace, and she was going home another than the woman who had left it an hour ago, sorely beaten and bent downward with the tempests of life. I do not doubt myself, that as she struggled to find out God under the trees, in the little sanctuary they made for her, that one like unto the Son of Man, had seen her, and had gently led her into a larger place of freedom and blessing than she could have found in any other way than that in which she was walking then. I am sure there was joy in heaven that day, when the Shepherd told the angels, "I have found My sheep, that was lost."

"Come with me a little piece up the road, dear," said Belle, and Janet answered willingly, "I'll go as far as the turn near the post-office; we ought to be hearing from mother before long."

They said very little. Belle was in a mood of stillness, but she put out her hand, hardened and callous with rough drudgery, and took Janet's softer one in hers. She said, "Janet, I asked you to come because I have something to say to you. I have not been altogether a good wife. I spoke to Tim in your hearing, as a wife should not, and I want you to pardon me. I mean to do better."

"You had great provocation." Janet's voice was emphatic. She was most resentful still against Tim; the thought in her heart was, "If she's going to yield to him, to concede things, to let him trample on her, everything will be at an end: the great hulking brute will soon use up every particle of her strength. Surely," thought Janet, her mind rushing to a con-

clusion, "my father has advised nothing like that, surely not."

But Belle went on, in low tones, "You are not married, Janet, and maybe you haven't yet been in love, so you don't know. When a woman loves, she gives all she has, and hopes to be; when she marries, she surrenders every bit of herself. I am Tim Nelson's *wife*. I must try to lead him to the One who has just this very day, how, I don't know, shown Himself to me. I didn't know the Lord when I left home, I do know Him now. It's a miracle; I'm going to love Tim through everything, from this day. I'm going to help Tim, if I can."

Into Janet's memory came an old world song of passion, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it," and answering that with the dulcet sweetness of a newer lyrical strain, came this triumphant note, "Love suffereth long, and is kind. Love never faileth."

They had arrived at the bend of the road. They stood there a moment, and on the south wind came the notes of a bugle. Round the corner swept the tally-ho with its laughing freight of city men and women, trim, beautifully apparelled, glad with the gayety of the road. In full contrast in the foreground, stood Belle and Janet. The latter in shirt waist and golf skirt, Belle in her blue cotton frock, with a silk handkerchief knotted around her neck. Both girls were bareheaded. The stage stopped. The men sprang down, and hats in hand, came to speak to Mrs. Nelson.

"Here, Elmer, help me!" cried a clear voice, and with an "I beg pardon," the man turned and lifted

Alice Kensett to the ground. She flew to Belle and threw her arms around her neck. Before Janet had time to feel the least in the way, Belle disengaged herself from Alice, and turning, presented the party. Mrs. Lorimer, Miss Kensett, Mr. Yancey, Mr. Thomas Fuller, Mr. Theodore Fuller were introduced to Miss Ward. The latter talked a few moments to Janet, and asked if in a day or two he might pay his respects to her father. "My old professor at Princeton told me when I came to the mountains to get into touch with Mr. Ward," he explained, "and only yesterday I ascertained where he was."

The little episode was soon over. The party mounted to their places, and drove on. At first they were silent, but Alice broke the spell.

"She doesn't look wretched after all, does she, Aunt Kitty?"

"She looks royal and victorious," answered Mrs. Lorimer.

"But she's been through a siege, poor girl," said Mr. Tom Fuller, and the other men agreed with him.

Belle retraced her steps to the cabin. Her little lad was watching for and ran to meet her. Mother was his magnet. Tim slouching as usual, was sitting on the bench by the door. He had been carrying water up the hill for his mother, who had told him in rather plain terms, what she thought of his laziness and his general short-comings. Belle saw that he was in a sullen mood, but somehow she was not afraid of him, nor even angered. As she reached the bench, he did not rise, nor offer to make room for her beside him, but she brushed his hair from his forehead with a caressing touch, and stooping down, kissed him.

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"Move a little, dear," she said. The blood flushed in his sallow cheek, for the unusual kindness melted him and broke down a barrier that had been between husband and wife, and Tim that day was sober.

"I reckon I'll go and shave!" he said, awkwardly. "I'm not fit for you to kiss, Dolly."

Dolly was an old term of endearment, not often used in these days. The mother came to the door, as Tim went over to the corner where his razors lay on a shelf.

"You'll have to hurry, son, dinner's nearly ready," she said.

On the stove, the coffee-pot was simmering. Soon, the mother took the corn bread from the oven, and dished up the bacon and greens. Then the family sat down to dinner, Donald in the middle.

IX

A PREACHING SERVICE

“ONE gets at the elemental things here, the primitive things.”

David Ward was having a chat with the doctor. The latter's gray horse was tethered to the fence.

“Regretting you came, old man?”

“Not I. But I'm realizing, as I never did before, how small I am, and how little I can do. Here one simply leans with his whole weight on the Holy Spirit. There's no other course. And, all about, there are such interesting lives, so full of comedy and tragedy, so rich in the midst of poverty, that I am amazed at the little I knew before I came.”

“David, my opinion is, that except for outside veneer, when you get under the surface, people are a good deal the same everywhere. I hear that Belle Nelson's going to let you hold a neighborhood prayer meeting in her house.”

“Yes: to-morrow evening.”

“Well, you take it coolly, but it's as if Daniel in the lion's den had invited his neighbors to step in and hold a meeting. Tim Nelson is the last man in the region I'd ever have expected to get hold of.”

“I haven't got hold of him, and so far as I can see, the Lord hasn't, but his wife has. She asked his consent I suppose and he gave it, and furthermore,

I'm told he's going to help along with the singing."

"And that's as if Nebuchadnezzar had said he would join in a hymn, when the brave three were walking round in the midst of the burning fiery furnace. But, David, there's another matter I want to speak of. Who's that young gentleman coming down the road with Janet, dressed up in store clothes?"

"That young man is one Theodore Fuller, a licentiate from Princeton. He's going to help me at the communion next Sabbath morning.

"Fuller! Fuller! Let me see," Doctor Huntoon was fond of genealogy, "if he's one of the New York Fullers, I can place him. His people came originally from Genesee, an uncle settled in Tennessee, an uncle, I mean, of this young man, if he's the fellow I think he is. How came he here, David?"

"He's spending his vacation somewhere in this region with friends. He's at Princeton Seminary still. But he's fallen in love with the mountains, as we all do; and wants to stay longer than the rest can. Come to our meeting at the Nelsons', my friend, and help us; Mr. Fuller promised to be there, and I believe we may depend on his crowd. They are old acquaintances of Mrs. Nelson."

"I'll be on hand, if only to act as a guard in case the meeting proves too much for Tim's manners. Unless somebody is ill and I am detained."

As the doctor sprang to the saddle, nimbly for a man of his age and build which was stocky and indicated weight, Janet waved him a good-bye. He soliloquized, as he rode,

"Nice girl, that, and just the one to captivate

Theodore Fuller. But, if I know her, he'll have to court my young lady. She'll not be one to haul down her flag too soon, bless her heart." The doctor laughed as he turned in the saddle and watched Theodore holding open the gate for Janet.

"I'm an old match-maker, but there's nothing to compare with love in the wide world; nothing, nothing." And he chirruped to Dandy, too sober paced and steady for his youthful name; and the two fared on together till the doctor drew rein at the door of a patient.

Neither Tim Nelson nor his wife had suggested their house as a rendezvous for a neighborhood meeting. It was the old mother who had thought of it, and mentioned the matter between two whiffs of her corncob pipe. Belle assented eagerly; Tim did not forbid: and Mr. Ward was asked to send word as he could around the district. A notice was tacked on the door of the little store where the mail was sorted on the same counter at which the neighbors bought tobacco, sugar, and tea; and also on the door of the red schoolhouse to which the children thronged with dinner pails in hand.

Incidents were so few in the countryside that any novelty was an event. Old women, musing on the extraordinary fact of Tim's allowing a preacher inside his lot, let alone his house, piously hoped that he had had a change of heart. Girls giggled for pure delight in being alive, as girls often do; and went as merrily to the meeting as if it had been a supper with dancing afterwards. The social instinct is keenly awake in rural communities, while at the same time starved because there is no outlet for it.

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In that wild land, too, united with much ignorance and no little superstition, there was a deep vein of reverence. Men whose consciences did not disturb them at all when the affair was one of distilling illicit whiskey, and eluding the revenue officers, men who were moonshiners banded together by solemn pledges and oaths, men who cherished lifelong feuds, and warned their enemies that if they ventured one inch across a certain indicated line, they were dead men, were devout and to some extent godly. They had family worship though they cheated in a horse trade, and one of them said, grimly, but sincerely, to Parson Ward, "We reckon we sort of average things up."

A motley throng filled Tim's little home, and overflowed on the porch and grass plot. It was an Indian summer night, and the air was soft and full of sweet scents. Women wrapped in blanket shawls sat on the steps; men perched on the fence. The lamps were lit; and the girls looked curiously on the books and pictures that made one side of the living room look as if it were too grand for the other. Many of the older ones could not read; most of the younger ones could, but of all there, none, except Janet and her father, had even a slight acquaintance with Emerson, Longfellow, Browning or Tennyson.

But just before the meeting began, this statement might have been modified, for there was an unexpected addition to the assembly. Alice Kensett, Mrs. Lorimer, the two Fullers and Mr. Yancey came strolling up as if by accident. Their arrival did not in any way disturb the grave composure of the

mountaineers. Such unimportant details as tailor made gowns and smart London suits did not impress them. Room was made for Alice beside Belle; and the elder Mrs. Nelson shook hands with Mrs. Lorimer as one empress might with another.

The meeting began informally. Mr. Ward started a hymn, one that he was sure everybody knew. "When I can read my title clear." It was followed by "Rock of Ages," and Mr. Fuller raised the tune; a third time Mr. Ward started a melody which was now taken up by only a few:

"O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope, for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

The cultivated singers swelled this hymn in a rich triumphant chord, but Mr. Ward was not satisfied; and he slipped into an old camp-meeting air which caught up every heart in its joyous lilt:

"Oh, how happy are they
Who their Saviour obey
And have laid up their treasure above.
Oh, what tongue can express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love?"

Here Tim contributed a fine tenor.

After this Mr. Ward prayed, reading from his little New Testament first. Then simply, but very earnestly, he told again the old, old story of Jesus and His love, and then Mr. Fuller led in prayer.

Janet was deeply moved by the scene. She sat near Belle whose chair was close to Donald's crib.

She had shaded it with a drapery of netting, and he slept through the meeting, as children do, oblivious to noise or stir. Janet fancied Miss Prescott or Nancy Wiburn in this quaint company, and wished for both. She had floated off into a dreamful recollection of Lucas, when she was aroused by hearing her father address her,

“Janet, sing something, my dear.”

Janet's voice was a pure, delicate soprano, not powerful, but very sweet in a room. Though taken by surprise, she needed no urging, and her father had known he might depend on her. She began,

“Moment by moment I'm kept in His love,” and sang the beautiful words through, with her whole heart in every line. Tim Nelson listened, his eyes responsive; his old mother nodded her head; the song expressed what she had lived. When she finished, Mr. Fuller prayed, as a man communes with his dearest friend, as if he saw the Lord. On the outside of the farthest group, an outlaw, who spent most of his time in hiding, heard, and said under his breath,

“Stranger, it's good to be you ! I'll try to find out what you've got that other people haven't.”

Slouching, black-browed Tim came when the meeting was over and said,

“Please, Miss Janet, say your prayers to-night for me. I want to be a better man ;” and his mother added,

“Praise the Lord !”

When the meeting broke up, five of the young people came to Mr. Ward and asked instruction; and under the trees was held an inquiry meeting, then and there. It was the beginning of a revival.

That night, Theodore Fuller, in his diary, pencilled

a date and wrote beside it some cabalistic letters. Nobody could have interpreted them then, but there came a time when he told his much-amused wife what they signified when he wrote them.

Theodore Fuller had, as a child, been taken to a communion in the Highlands of Scotland. When the Sabbath day dawned, in which he was to assist Mr. Ward in the services, he was reminded of that day.

The church members lived a long way apart. The church was a plain wooden building without a single architectural beauty, but it was of good size and the pews were roomy. Whole families were there together on a sacramental Sabbath, fathers, mothers, and children, to babies in arms. A good many dogs followed their masters, but they remained outside and seemed to know that they could not put their heads within. Many of the congregation came on horseback, a child seated on the horse with the mother, or two girls on a pony. Not a few were crowded into old-fashioned carryalls and carts; some walked miles. Young men and maidens who were known to be sweethearts, managed not to be seated too far apart. Little tots of two and three trotted up and down the aisles. Mothers hushed their babies, or fed them under their shawls. The neighborhood, all of it, was in church.

Not many were coming in on profession at this time, but none the less it was a sacred and blessed season, impressive to those who were not of the church, as well as to the rest. An infant was baptized. David Ward held it in his arms, and said,

“Ruth, a child of the covenant, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

More than one grown up child of the covenant who had wandered away, felt that the minister's eye was upon him in the sermon that followed. For David Ward had taken for his text, these words, "They hated Me without a cause." And he dwelt on the enormity of sin, the enormity of malice, the outrageous hardness of the heart that can hate the All-Loving One without a cause. Hate was chill; hate was absence; hate was death. Then he dwelt on that strange love of the Redeemer which includes every one of the race; and as he preached, his words, came rushing onward like a spring flood, till they were as a torrent in their haste; so much had he to tell, and so short was the time. And the white-haired judge, who sat in front, bowed his head on his hand and wept; and the frowning moonshiner, in the back seat, fell on his knees and exclaimed, loud enough to be heard half way over the church,

"God be merciful to me, a sinner."

In the old Springdale days David Ward had often been eloquent. Now he was not so much eloquent as he was a man with a message, a man under orders, a man who must preach and win souls, or die.

They sang, could Janet ever forget it, the strains rising, swelling, resounding,

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

"See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

The broken bread; the poured out wine; the utter silence; the bowed heads; the solemnity of some; the uplifting of all; Janet's soul seemed, to her own apprehension, like a cup filled to the brim. At the very end, they sang the twenty-third psalm, and there were those present who had learned it in the Scottish version, at their mothers' knees.

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want :
He makes me down to lie.
In pastures green ; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

"My soul He doth restore again ;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Ev'n for His own name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill.
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff they comfort still.

"Goodness and mercy, all my life,
Shall surely follow me ;
And in God's house forever more
My dwelling-place shall be.

The revival was like a kindling flame. Reserved people, who habitually restrain their emotions, are apt, when they let themselves go, to express more than others by sheer reaction. In cabins, in stores, by the roadside, men and women talked of the great news the preacher had brought them; and the manse, from morning till night, had people coming and going. The busier David was, the happier he felt.

As for provisions, Janet had no stint, for the parishioners did not come empty handed. No more generous people live than the mountaineers. They brought meal and honey, ham and potatoes, sometimes a chicken, and sometimes corn for the minister's horse; a stream of benefactions flowed through the manse doors. The table always had an extra cup and plate.

Mr. Fuller was calling on Janet, one afternoon, when up the road came a queer procession, odd to Northern eyes, though familiar enough in that locality. A man walked along, leading a brown, big boned horse. On the horse sat a young woman with her sunbonnet shading a blushing face. Carefully strapped behind her saddle, was a bag of meal.

"A wedding," said Janet. "I wonder if daddy is at home."

"Is the preacher in?" called a voice from the gate.

"Yes," came cheerily from the study, and as Mr. Ward appeared at the door, the young man, a picturesque figure in wide felt hat, top boots, and trousers tucked into them for security, lifted the bride to the ground, and side by side they entered the manse parlor. Probably, neither of them had ever seen a room, which to their thought, was so grand, for it was a bit of Springdale set down in Tennessee, and on every side there were tokens of a taste and refinement which this pair could not have hitherto encountered. But they showed no wonder, they took the splendor for granted; and with Janet, Hughie, and Mr. Fuller, for witnesses, they were married. The groom did not remove his hat, till Mr.

Ward prayed. Then he held it in his hand. When the ceremony was over, the man put on the table a wallet, from which, after some groping, he drew forth a silver dollar.

"Parson," he said, "is this enough?"

"Quite enough for me, my friend, if it is not more than you can afford to give."

"I wish I could make it ten," said the newly made husband, as he led his wife to the gate, and helped her to mount the horse. They disappeared up the hillslope, their whole outfit for life consisting of the horse and the bag of meal. On the cabin hearth, the man would light a fire. A bed, a table, two chairs, a kettle and a spider, a room with glazed windows; the bride would feel herself the equal of any princess.

"That man ought to have been told to take off his hat," said Mr. Fuller.

"That man," answered Mr. Ward, "takes off his hat to Jehovah, but to no mortal man. He lives under his hat. It is a part of himself. He was large-hearted with his fee. It has taken him weeks to save that dollar. Janet, we must follow these people up, and get them into our church."

Mr. Ward went back to his books. Janet had no servant just now, Chloe being ill, so Hughie and Stuart, who had not yet gone to college for the winter term, and Theodore Fuller, helped her to get supper. They made a frolic of it, and Theodore felt it an honor to be permitted when it was over, to wipe the cups and saucers. Janet was as frank with him as with her brothers. Somehow, he did not seem to be getting any nearer to knowing her than he had on their first day of meeting. She was lovely, but remote.

X

A BUSY WINTER

TIM NELSON'S improvement was partial, merely. He had an impulse to better living, but the appetite for drink was too deeply seated to be cured by anything but the grace of God. For a little while he was more considerate, more tender; he undertook the harder tasks, and helped Belle with the housework, as she grew more in need of relief. His mother went home, leaving word that she was to be sent for when wanted. Mrs. Ward, looking ten years younger and prettier, much refreshed by her visit to her girlhood's home, returned; and with her came Elizabeth Evans, who wanted to see Janet in the manse, and Barbara Maurice in her home across the county. The three girls felt that it was having college over again, to be together; and they made many plans for the next year, when Barbara's music lessons in New York were to begin. Elizabeth was to have a season in society, and Janet hoped to try her wings in some independent work. Nancy was already there, in the thick of things, studying hard, and laying the foundation for future success.

Elizabeth flitted hither and yon, spending mornings in little rooms where an old woman spun and wove, and a young woman churned and made butter,

petting the shy children, and making friends with the dogs and cats. Janet and she laughed at Mrs. Ward's notion of a woman's club, as impracticable here, but Mrs. Ward was more firmly resolved on it than ever, and she put it into execution by asking every woman she could find, to a tea at the manse. Not an afternoon tea with dainty refreshments and a table where pretty girls poured and served the tea; but an old-fashioned bountiful supper, mountain fashion, with fried chickens for the piece de resistance, relays of hot biscuits, plenty of cake, preserves and coffee. Two or three neighbors helped get this meal and helped clear it away, and it was during its progress that Mrs. Ward proposed their coming together at the manse for an hour a week that winter, to study and talk about a winsome old book, "The Pilgrim's Progress." Most of them had heard of this book, others thought they would like to make its acquaintance, and three or four who were rather superior women, already knew Christiana and her children, or had heard of Christian's journey from the city of destruction to the city of God. Emily Ward had a magic that no one could resist, and when she asked, nobody refused her.

"The manse is likely to be a very much used place this winter," said Mr. Ward at breakfast soon after the club had been inaugurated. "I find there isn't any money to pay a teacher, and so the school is not to be opened. I have been telling the girls and boys that they must come to me."

"Daddy!" exclaimed Janet.

"I taught my own boys and you, my daughter. I can surely teach these little people."

"But dear heart," the wife's eyes were protesting and her speech was in italics, "you have no time. I cannot consent. We cannot *let* you wear yourself out."

"Darling, when God shows one a plain duty, God always gives one time to do it. I ought to have been a head master; I enjoy teaching."

"Well, you'll not be allowed to wear the martyr's crown yet, daddy," said Janet. "For what have I been to college? I'm coaching Hughie and Ralph as it is, I'll take the rest of the children, boys and girls both, and we'll have them in the dining-room every day. I can do it just as well as not."

"But your work, your writing, my daughter?"

"It can wait. Yours has waited a lifetime and it's better than mine."

Elizabeth had heard this conversation with interest. She was daily learning lessons of self-sacrifice in the simple sweetness of the manse.

"Mr. Ward," she said, "there is really no need of this for either you or Janet. My father would be happy to pay a teacher's salary, I am sure."

"To be sure old Horace would do a lot of things, if I asked him, but I'd rather not have it that way. He may endow a school for the mountain girls some day. That would be a grand worth while scheme. But I don't want any drop in the bucket sort of charity from Horace, so Beth, you're not to mention this. Our way is really the only way now. I want these people and their children to love me and mine and to trust us wholly. Not for our sake. For the Master's."

Elizabeth said no more. She observed and pondered things in her heart. Years after there were re-

sults at Dene's Mills and in Tennessee from this visit.

One night just as the manse was wrapped in its first sleep, the pastor was aroused by a knock at the door. Snow was falling, and the wind was cold. Mr. Ward opened the window.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It's I, Timothy Nelson," was the answer. "My wife is ill and I'm going for the doctor. But I can't get mother till morning, and she needs a woman with her. And there's nobody near by, and it's going to be a deep snow."

Mr. Ward was troubled. He dared not let his wife go through the snow-drifts, nor expose her to the cutting cold. Janet was a young girl. How could he send her? Fortunately they had a servant, old Betsey, a woman whom they had taken in a while ago, because of her poverty. Motherly and strong, her dark skin hid a kind heart. Mr. Ward called her and explained the situation.

"I'll dress and take a lantern and go with you, Betsey," he said. "Put on your warmest clothes and wrap up your head. It's not far, though it's a rough road in the storm."

Betsey was soon ready and Mr. Ward waited for her with the lantern. Just as he was about to close the outer door, a light hand was laid on his arm. There stood Janet, enveloped in a long Shaker cloak, her anxious face peeping from its nun-like hood.

"Father, take me too," she pleaded. "Belle hasn't any one, mother, sister, or friend. I can look after little Donald and I'll leave when old Mrs. Nelson

comes. I *can't* stay away from Belle now. Please let me go."

"It's no place for you, my dear," he began, but her mother from the room above, interrupted: "David, don't delay, and let Janet go. It's right she should."

The tramp up the mountain was slow, encumbered as they were by the thickly falling flakes, but they kept on, and after a struggle reached the cabin. Janet pushed open the door, and they went in. There was a fire of logs on the hearth, but snow had sifted through the crevices and drifted up close to Donald's crib. Back and forth, back and forth, white and wan, walked Belle, her face drawn with pain. A look of exquisite relief flitted across her countenance when she saw Janet and Betsey. Mr. Ward came forward and took her hand.

"We are friends, my dear," he said. "If your husband and the doctor from below can't get here till morning, as may happen in the storm, you need have no fear. Betsey will stay as long as you need her, and all will be well." Then Janet smiled to hear her father repeat his most loved quotation: "God's in His heaven. All's right with the world."

Dawn did break on a white landscape before Tim returned with Doctor Huntoon, and soon after, there was a white lily of a maiden child lying beside her mother. Janet had taken Donald up-stairs and had lain beside him there in the loft bed, and when Betsey called her to breakfast before it was full daylight, there was her name-child safe in this strange country of ours. Belle smiled at Janet wistfully.

She did not go home till old Mrs. Nelson arrived three days later when the tempest was over, and a

path had been made through the deep drifts. And it was well she remained, for Tim who had kept sober longer than his wont, under the influence of Belle's constant kindness and the spell of the prayer-meetings to which Mr. Ward often asked him, suddenly reached the limit of his strength. His mother and his wife knew the symptoms of a break-down, the restlessness, the fretfulness, the unreasonable temper; they knew that something too strong for Tim Nelson had got possession of him. When the strong man armed goes away and leaves the house swept and garnished it may be that seven others worse than he shall enter in a day of breach. He had been vexed that the babe was a girl, and had taken little notice of her, to the grandmother's outspoken anger. Belle had not cared. Her own mother love would be enough for the daughter, and she had long since understood that it was she, and not her husband who must bring up her children. There had been hours when seeing Tim in a maudlin state, unspeakably revolting, because then he was tender, or in a crazed state when he was irresponsibly cruel, or a state of drunken stupor when he slept like a log, bloated, crimson, filling the house with the dreadful fumes of his breath, she had felt as if she must snatch up her boy and run, anywhere to save him from his father.

When she had told this to Mr. Ward, not on the first or the second occasion of her talks with that good man, he had said, "Do not forecast the future. Live one day at a time. 'As the day thy strength shall be.' What you should do when boy is older, will be revealed to you then. At present, unless your life is in danger, stay here and trust in God. I

am praying that Tim may be saved from himself and from Satan." Then Belle tried loving and praying for him more than ever.

Tim's mother prayed too. But even as she prayed, she remembered Tim's father, a stronger man than he, but a drunkard, and his grandfather, who had died in delirium tremens.

Doctor Huntoon said plainly to Mr. Ward, "The best thing that Tim Nelson can do is to drink himself into the grave. That sweet wife could then go home to her father and bring up her children as they ought to be brought up. Pray for that, my dear David. Oh, I am a heathen man no doubt in your eyes, but I have yet to see a wavering reed like Tim Nelson straightened and toughened into a hickory tree. God help Belle is *my* prayer!"

The tempter did not let go his hold and a fortnight later between two days, in the dusk of night, Tim sneaked off like a thief. When morning came he was gone, gone on the worst spree of his life, and his mother turned white when a passer-by halted at the gate and told her that Dan Trethicum, a hereditary foe, had come to town and was on the war-path, mad with moonshine whiskey and breathing threatenings and slaughter.

"The Trethicums and the Nelsons have been enemies from way, way, way back," she explained to Mr. Ward, to whom she at once went. "It began when we all settled here, in my great-grandfather's time: they quarrelled over a boundary. In every generation since a Nelson has killed a Trethicum, or a Trethicum killed a Nelson, and the women have borne the brunt of the sorrow,

the brunt of the shame. The women have the heaviest end."

Her stern hard face quivered. She held herself in by main force.

"Please, sir," she said, "if anything happens to Tim, look out for poor Belle. She was a lady. She hadn't ought to have come into our set, but she is here and she's got to suffer. There'll be murder done if those two meet up together."

"I'll go to the crossroads and find the constable."

Something very like a sneer flickered over the mountain woman's face. She drew herself up haughtily.

"A constable 'll never lay hand on either Tim Nelson or Dan Trethicum. They're bad but they're not low down enough for constables."

Mr. Ward saw his mistake. Northern born and Northern trained, he did not always catch the point of view of the Southerner.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Nelson," he said, "I'll go myself."

"And I'll go with you," she replied.

Belle was sitting up, her face sweet as that of a saint, a Madonna light in her pure eyes, her blossom of a baby in her arms, and Janet was teaching Donald his letters beside the fire. Janet was teaching everybody this winter; her pupils came and went. Elizabeth went to Barbara's for the holidays, declaring she was tired of living with busy people, the manse was as bad as a factory and Janet never had a minute to herself. As for Mr. Ward, he was a modern St. Francis of Assisi.

"I can't keep the pace of so much goodness. If it were not for dear Mrs. Ward, who does her best to

tether her husband and daughter to practical things, they'd both be ready for translation at once."

"What do they live on?" Barbara's father asked. "Has Mr. Ward private means? That parish is very poor."

"They haven't much money, but they live in comfort. It isn't that, Mr. Maurice, of which I complain. They're so heavenly-minded, and I'm not."

"Is Theodore Fuller heavenly-minded too?" inquired Barbara.

Elizabeth grew grave and ceased her bantering.

"There's not a man I know good enough for our beautiful Janet with her sunshiny face, but if she marries Mr. Fuller, she'll think him good enough, and he's really very manly and fine. He's in love. Janet is too absorbed in the parish to have noticed the fact."

"But he's not here, is he?"

"Not now, but he's in Princeton, and there are mails that carry books and magazines and letters. The manse has a line of communication with Princeton Seminary."

Down to the village crossroads, Mr. Ward hastened with Mrs. Nelson. They met friends of hers who reassured them. Trethicum had gone home, sober, hours ago, and Tim, quite able to take care of himself had announced that he was intending to return to his place about the same time. The friends thought there was no danger, as the men's roads were in quite opposite directions.

The old mother was not reassured. She was superstitious, and ill omens had haunted her for a week. An owl had hooted mournfully in the forest, a dog had howled under her window, a hare had run across

her path. Worse still, a heavy, depressing premonition had hung about her ever since Tim last shuffled out of the house, brought back by her resolute will, only to elude her vigilance at midnight. For years she had known this presentiment, but generally she had shaken it off. This time it was prophetic.

In utter silence she went onward. Presently at the turn of the road, at the same place where Belle was used in the summer to resort to prayer, both the mother and the minister started back, and faced each other aghast. Then from the woman's throat burst a long, piercing, agonized cry, like the keen of the Irish over their dead, or the lamentations of the Orientals when they weep for woe. In every land the primitive griefs are the same: the primitive ploughshare turns up the same blood-red furrows.

"My son! My son!" she cried, and sinking on the snowy ground took the head of Tim on her lap. Near him lay his foe, both shot through the heart, and whether both were murderers or one was a suicide none could tell. Their careers were ended, and with them the feud of the Trethicums and Nelsons closed forever.

Belle sat in her room, white robed, with her baby in her arms, when there was the sound of feet at the door, and men brought home her dead. She was awe-struck, shocked, but quiet. She shed no tear. Even her mother-in-law jealous for her son, could find no fault with Belle, though she repressed her moans and made no violent demonstration. Days passed, and Belle Nelson's first tears were shed because she could not weep. She was amazed and disturbed that she felt so relieved. The man who has worn a ball

and chain, does not at once understand how freely he can move without them; and it was so with her. Gradually a tenderer spirit hushed her pain. She began to idealize the man who had gone. She forgot his brutality, his grossness, his uncongeniality. He was again the gallant lover who had coaxed her from home and friends to live with him in the midst of the wilderness.

But when this sweeter spirit brooded over her with its wings of peace, she was again a daughter at home, in her father's house, beloved, encompassed with service, faring sumptuously every day. Her children were with her, and the cabin in the mountains had receded into a dream of the misty past.

XI

EASTER TIDE

Never yet was a spring-time,
Late though lingered the snow,
That there came no tender south-wind,
That the buds forgot to blow.

LATE and cold as was that winter in the mountains, there was an end of its reign at last. Steadily, triumphantly marched on the season of the golden days when anemone and trillium bloomed in the sheltered places, and arbutus opened pink petals in the covert of brown pine needles. Janet was a child of the country, but she had not dreamed of the affluence and fragrance of spring in Tennessee. She was beside herself with the bliss of it, the opulence of flower and leafage, the splendor of the dogwood and the yellow jasmine and she and her father spent hours driving through the forest ways, when Mr. Ward had people to visit, or preaching services to attend. Her mother would stand in the door and watch them going, and then take up her homely tasks with a cheer foreign to her in the years of her youth. Writing to an old school friend about this time, Mrs. Ward explained the change by this remark, "I don't know that I am in much better health than I used to be, but spiritually I have reached a haven of rest. Formerly the Bible promises did not mean so much to me as they do in these days.

‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee,’ is my proved rock of strength. I see less of David than I did when I used to stand guard over the door-bell, lest the congregation and the travelling agent and visiting brother from another parish should needlessly interrupt him. The latch-string is loose in the mountains, and we have no door-bell. David is as accessible to all comers as I am myself, and in these parts, if either of us were once not at home to any caller, we should lose caste tremendously. Of Janet I see as little as of her father. She is absorbed in her work among the women and children, and has been the leading spirit in the Woman’s Missionary Society for the last few months. Our people are poor, but they are not niggardly. There are rich Christians who are paupers in spirit, but it is not so with our dear friends here. The little they have to give is large in God’s sight because it is so gladly consecrated. Janet is not to be here long though, she needs a wider sphere, and there are tokens that foretell flight before many months. No, she isn’t to be married yet, though I, her mother, rejoice with trembling as I notice that she is not to be left outside the experience which of all others crowns a woman’s life. Janet will not be a wife as early as you and I were, but she will not say ‘no’ when a certain somebody asks her. At present that somebody has a mother and invalid sister dependent upon him for partial support, so that he cannot further burden himself. Janet has been writing poetry, some of it is printed, and she receives payment for it. Some, usually the best, is rejected, but I tell her not to mind,

she has had the fun of writing it, which must be a joy. It would be to me.

"There they come, my two home missionaries, and I must close my letter. The boys are well. I love you, dear, though I don't often write. How can I, when I must cook and churn, and clean house, and do a lot of useful things which enable the minister to do his work with an easy mind. I wish you could see David. He is handsomer than ever with his deep blue honest eyes and his silver hair, and as for his preaching, it was never so good. It even helps his wife, who has ceased to listen vicariously, and is not worried about the impression her alter ego is making when he gives God's message. Again, good-bye."

"Well, mother," Janet's eyes were radiant, "I have news for you, Barbara's engaged, and to whom of all people?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine."

"No wonder you can't, dearest; the list of Barbara's swains was legion and she left a lot of desolated hearts behind her when she went away to study. But she's been captured, and that quickly by an impetuous suitor, who would brook no delay. Three months ago they were strangers, now her father's consent has been asked, and Barbara's coming home to be married at Easter."

"You'll have to tell me the man's name. I never could guess riddles or conundrums or find out secrets. Pray who is this headlong youth who is so fortunate?"

"Phil Evans, mother. Elizabeth's Cousin Phil."

"Tom Evan's brother, I presume."

"Yes, the Evans' connection is large. It's Tom

who is in love with Elizabeth, you know. Phil just suits Barbara, but all Lucas who knew her as a happy, merry girl who lived for the day will be amazed that she is going to be a missionary in India. Phil and she will spend a year at Oxford and then sail away to some old Hindu city, where their work awaits them. Mother, I've had a check from the *Onward*, and it will just buy a wedding gift for Barbara."

"I wish it would buy a new frock for Barbara's bridesmaid, for I suppose you'll be that. Elizabeth and you, no doubt."

"Yes, but my old white muslin will do perfectly well with a little freshening. Father and I have been visiting up on the mountain and—where is father? Oh! buried in a book by this time; we came upon that couple who were married here when Ted Fuller was visiting in the manse. They were very glad we came, and they've promised to be at church next Sabbath."

Mrs. Ward noted that Janet spoke of Mr. Fuller as "Ted." It was an inadvertence that was by way of a revelation. The two had grown much more familiar than of old, and since Theodore had left Princeton they were exchanging letters often.

"What is Mr. Fuller doing, dear?"

"Assisting Dr. ——— in a large church in New York. He's kept busy just as he likes to be. Oh, what a busy world it is even here, where nothing happens except to ones and twos. By the by, mother, daddy's had a letter from Deacon Pumblechook!"

"A letter from Mr. Leland! Why it's strange he didn't tell me. Your father's growing absent-

mininded. He was never that. Run and tell him I want to hear Springdale news."

It isn't every minister who with unruffled brow can meet an interruption from his family when he is meditating on a sermon, but David Ward could. He left a half finished sheet of notes lying on his open Bible, and with a smiling face, held out Mr. Leland's letter. It seemed a long one.

"I don't want it to read, dear, I want to know what made him write."

"So far as I can fathom it an impulse of genuine old-fashioned friendship. He knows that Springdale holds a big bit of my heart, that I shall love it to the end of my life, and that rough chestnut burr as he is, I love him with his prickles for the sweetness they may hide. Well the new man at Springdale is a great success, thank God! They're building an addition to the manse, and remodeling the church, and at every communion a goodly number are coming forward to confess Christ. I am very happy over it."

"He only sent you word because he thought it would hurt your feelings," said Janet.

"Yes, I can't credit Mr. Leland with a generous motive," said Mrs. Ward.

"Oh, women, women," groaned the minister, "so noble yet so unjust. I am not in the habit of criticising you two, you are generally in the right, but as it happens you are now both wrong and should be reproved. Your consciences may be trusted to do it so I won't. Mr. Leland expresses great regard for all of us, and has sent me fifty dollars as an Easter gift, a little earlier than the season, 'to be used for yourself, dominie, or for your work, just as you please.'"

"I take back my doubts," said Mrs. Ward with a smile.

"And I'm a mean, low-down, ill-conditioned girl, and you must kiss me and forgive me, daddy. I'll not call the old Deacon Mr. Pumblechook ever again." So Janet made amends.

Mrs. Ward knew several ways to spend that fifty dollars, but she would not suggest them. It went in repairing the leaky roof of the church, in painting it anew inside, and in purchasing hymn books. When Easter arrived, there was a church that seemed almost too beautiful for use, when the people gathered to sing their resurrection hymns. The pulpit was adorned with lilies, and the lilies of Christ's peace bloomed that day in hearts that had been at war with Him.

That Easter was memorable in the countryside because it was a red-letter time to those who had grown used to gray days only. Those who pass through the mountain land are always touched by the sorrowful, uncomplaining looks of the women, who soon after youth lose their beauty and bloom. By slow degrees a change had been wrought among Mr. Ward's people; there was a new brightness. One boy, loyal to the core, expressed it when he came back from college, a walk of forty miles. He had no money to go, but his father had given him a heifer, and driving her before him, he had gone away in the autumn, a stick over his shoulder balancing the bundle of his simple home-made clothing. The heifer had been sold, the lad had subsisted, he had made good progress, and now he had returned to help his father with the spring planting.

"Mammy," he said, "what's come to you? You look so young and so pretty."

The mother laughed. Mothers never outgrow a liking for the compliments of their sons, "I've been learning things too, son," she said. "I've learned a heap of things since you went away, and I do feel younger, sure enough."

The crippled girl who seldom left her chair by the window, was borne to church that day in the arms of her brothers, the blind man who felt every step painfully with a cane, was there too, and the little church was thronged by men and women of other places and wider culture, among them a sojourner from a northern city, who, going away, said to Barbara's father, as they prepared for their long drive home, "That preacher is thrown away down here. I'd like to have him in my town where there'd be those who could appreciate him."

"You couldn't tempt David Ward away, judge," said Mr. Maurice. "He's got too big a task here, and he's like his Lord, the common people hear him gladly."

Nevertheless out of that Easter sermon grew the invitation that later urged Mr. Ward to supply for a period of months a prominent vacant pulpit in a northern city of wealth and prosperity. At Springdale the chance would have been eagerly welcomed, but Mr. Ward had passed far beyond the ambitions of Springdale. He had become what he came hither to be, a wilderness pastor, and not even for a season would he cease from his task.

Easter week and Barbara's wedding gave Janet a break from home cares and duties. She went to be

one of the gay house party who were to send Barbara off on her new career, and there she met some of her old Lucas friends, for Barbara's mother crowded the house to its utmost capacity with her daughter's friends, and the kith and kin around opened their homes for the entertainment of guests.

Janet was shown by the trim maid to a wee bit of a chamber under the roof, where she found everything for her comfort, the chamber proved to be one of three, en suite, separated by soft portières of flowered cretonne. After she had taken the points of her special room, which reminded her of an alcove at Lucas, she thought she heard a rustle and a whisper in the one next to her. The whisper grew into speech, there was suppressed laughter. Then the curtain was gently drawn back, and there stood Elizabeth Evans.

"Barbara thought her bridesmaids ought to be together," she said, still laughing.

"Of course, and it's like her to have planned it, but why do you laugh? Are you hiding anything, Elizabeth?"

"She is, she is hiding me," and forth stepped somebody whom Janet had not seen for months, not since she had left her on the railway platform at Lucas when commencement was over, Nancy Wilburn!

"You didn't think that Barbara would be married without asking me, did you? And of course, I said yes with thanks, and I'm to be a bridesmaid, too. I am to be paired with one of you, the other with Agnes Maurice."

Those three girls talked late that night when the

house was still. And the outcome of their talk was that when they returned to New York, Janet went with them.

Weeks afterwards on a sultry summer morning, an editor, bored but benevolent, rose from his office chair to greet a contributor. Editors do not invariably rise but this one was gracious and moreover he had a kind word for most girls who sought his sanctum, having daughters of his own.

The office boy had brought in her card, Miss Ward, and it meant no more to the editor than if it had been Miss White or Miss Black. But the young lady who advanced to meet him extended a note written some weeks back to herself, in which in his own hand the great man read, "I am happy to accept your sketch, 'Aunt Linda's Spinning Wheel.' Enclosed please find Messrs. Flin & Frower's check for fifteen dollars. If you can write other stories as good as this, I shall be glad to see more of your work."

"I think I can," said the young woman confidently, taking an offered seat, while the editor in spirit regretted his rashness. So many times he had met the new contributor whose single bright verse or strong sketch seemed the sole efflorescence of her genius, who once, and once only, soared away and broke the bonds of the commonplace, yet he still kept on giving his cordial encouragements, only that they might cause tears and disappointment. Every editor is on the lookout for the rising star on the horizon, and there is over the bright new find joy that is never felt at the most admirable work of the author whose fame is made. But editors are seldom enthusiastic till they are sure. However, Mr. Earnshaw's

manner was genial, and he dashed no cold water on the sanguine hopes of the young woman, who had brought him, modestly enough, another story, and who proffered her wish for steady work.

"Anything, ever so little, that will bring me a certain something every week," was her desire.

Again the editor groaned in spirit. They all wanted just that. Fledgelings from college, middle-aged men with literary ambitions, elderly decayed gentlewomen with the better days they had seen clamoring from their rusty black and their carefully mended gloves and home-made jackets, and pretty maids like this one, they wanted the same thing, a steady job. Mr. Earnshaw had learned to say no, so gently that it did not occur to his auditors that it was not yes, till the interview was over; he had told unbelieving hearers a hundred times that positions were few, and that the ins did not generally give them up to the outs, but to Janet Ward, he said something different, something more encouraging.

"I wouldn't try for an office place if I were you, Miss Ward. It would clip your wings too soon. I think you can do better. Whatever you have sent me, whether I have accepted or declined it, has been above the average. Go on writing the thing that comes to you; you have, though you may not know it, an individual touch. Tell the thing you see. Don't hurry your stories. Take time."

"I wish I could, Mr. Earnshaw, but I must pay my way. I haven't any money, and I have no one to fall back upon."

"Ah!" The editor put the objection aside as trivial. But the girl's eyes, full of practical wisdom,

held his. He was always, oddly, a mystic as well as a man of affairs.

"You will earn all you need, in the between times," he suddenly answered, coming out of the clouds, "by doing newspaper work. There is plenty of that to be found by a clever girl in a great city."

He said no more. She rose, supposing the interview closed. She had put her city address on her envelope.

"Come in again on Monday afternoon," said Mr. Earnshaw. "I may be able to give you some points, and some introductions. You are staying in town?"

"Yes, with friends," she answered.

"Ah! That is well;" and the office boy conducted her to the elevator.

Mr. Earnshaw, left alone, lit his pipe, and at once began to read the manuscript Janet had brought, oblivious of the pile already on his desk.

A little bewildered, but still confident, Janet left the publishing house, and walked up a narrow side street not much wider than an alley, between tall buildings that towered up like the rocky walls of a canyon. Newsboys scurried about, shouting; policemen sauntered grandly on; trim young women, alert and preoccupied, walked briskly down the street; pedestrians jostled each other; the roar of the town was in Janet's ears. She stood on the curb, feeling what a mere bit of drift she was in this great, mad whirlpool, and was about to signal a cable car, when, dismayed, she discovered that she had lost her purse. She knew she had it five minutes ago, but it was gone. An old apple-woman, seated at a small table, saw her look of consternation, and called to her.

"Dearie," all old women made much of Janet. It reminded her of home, and she smiled, "Dearie, here's a nickel. You can pay me back when you come this way again. You've lost your pocket-book. I'm afraid it's been stolen on you."

"There wasn't much in it," said Janet, unspeakably grateful that she had yielded to Nancy, and left all but her change at the flat where they lived. "But I can walk."

"Where to?" said the woman.

Janet told her.

"It's three miles if it's wan step. Yez'll take my nickel."

And she did. She boarded a cable car, and a man in the corner lifted his hat, and came to her with a beaming face. It was Theodore Fuller. The two had met several times since the coming of Janet to town, but nevertheless, Mr. Fuller was surprised and delighted to see her; and her face reflected the pleasure of his.

"You could not have chanced upon me more opportunely," she said. "I owe an apple-woman, over on the corner by the bridge, five cents; and if you will pay her for me when next you pass, I will reimburse you."

"How do you happen to be in the debt of an apple woman, for that magnificent sum, Janet?"

"I've had one of the experiences of country folk who come to town, or of heedless city folk. I was walking up from an editor's office, with my head in the clouds and my fancy rioting in all sorts of bright possibilities, when a pickpocket relieved me of my change purse. It is very mortifying."

"You did not lose much, I trust?" he said anxiously.

"No, only a half dollar. I know your Mission is down here somewhere, so that it won't be needful for me to make a special errand to pay my benefactress to-morrow. By the way, you don't ask what Mr. Earnshaw said. Don't you wish to know?"

"Don't I? Indeed, I do. By your blissful countenance, I imagine that he accepted your story on the spot. It's fortunate that he did not give you a check."

Janet laughed.

"You will never begin to understand what a sanguine disposition I have. Nobody does, except dad, and he has exactly the same. Mr. Earnshaw, now that I consider the matter, promised me nothing, beyond the reading of the stuff I left with him. But he made some suggestions and told me I might call again next week. Mr. Earnshaw advises me to try work on the papers."

"The daily papers?"

"Why, of course."

"I can't feel acquiescent in that view—for you——"

"Nancy has given the same advice."

"Oh, yes, Nancy! She is used to encountering all sorts of people in all sorts of places; to fending for herself; to being out, if need be, alone after dark. You have been jealously cared for, your entire life, Janet. I wouldn't like your taking up reporting."

"What would you like?" said Janet a little stiffly.

There were several things Mr. Fuller would have liked, but the car was not the place to tell them, and

besides, poverty, of a kind, held him back. He would have liked, in true manly fashion, to stand between Janet Ward and the world, but even as he thought of the bliss of this, as a future possibility, there rose up before him the vision of a fretful face, his invalid sister's; and a bowed form, his mother's, in a far away home. For much of their comfort, these two were dependent on him; and his stipend was not large, so that whatever means he had outside of it were devoted to the loved ones at home. Presently he said:

"Janet, I have a conviction that you can do splendidly if you'll stay up in your little eyrie at Nancy's and write stories and things, and sell them. You are too dainty and feminine for the rough and tumble of New York newspaper life. I should hate, unspeakably, to have you lose any of your delicate charm, to become one of those teasing and persistent interviewers, who care for nothing but news, and who gradually part with some of their moral sense in the insane competitions of the day."

"Well, Theodore, you don't pay me much of a compliment. You seem to regard what you are pleased to call my charm, as a veneer that can easily be rubbed off or chipped away. You think me so weak that I could lose my moral sense without a struggle. I am my father's daughter, and certainly not quite inexperienced. I might have stayed in the mountains and written there. I came to New York for new ideas, for an open door, for a chance to get on at the centre, instead of staying way out on the circumference."

Janet's tone was hurt. Her companion was quick to feel that he had made a bit of a mistake.

"You must pardon my blundering," he said. "And pray don't attribute to me, sentiments that I never meant. You shouldn't resent my wish, to keep you protected from everything that annoys and distresses you."

"It is the usual masculine attitude, I believe, but I think it is a little medieval. Women are so much in the front of things now, that one seems like a back number, who takes your view."

"Janet, that is slang. I have never been used to hearing you use slang. Can it be that New York is already brushing off your bloom?"

He spoke playfully, but Janet was offended. Somehow, they were out of touch to-day, and the more they tried to get into harmony, the worse was their failure. Janet did not understand that Theodore had been idealizing her for months, and could not bear a flaw in his idol; even her dropping into the familiar commonplace of every-day slang, vexed him. On her part, she resented a certain air of proprietorship and of mentorship, which he had insensibly adopted.

"I presume you are getting in the way of lecturing, since you have had a regular congregation to preach to," she said sweetly, and now it was Theodore's turn to be annoyed. He took refuge in silence, and they passed the remainder of their time in the car without a syllable of conversation. They were almost at their journey's end. They had transferred twice, since they left the down-town neighborhood where the newspapers are clustered like bees in a swarm, and now they were far up-town, on the West side, in a region of lofty flats, beautiful private

dwellings, and open spaces, with reaches of green-sward and glimpses of trees when they skirted Central Park. It occurred to Mr. Fuller that he was losing precious time and behaving extremely like an idiot in doing so, and as he helped Janet from the car, he endeavored to make his peace.

"The best of friends make mistakes, Janet, and it is the privilege of friendship to be very patient. Please forget whatever I've said that has not been agreeable to you. I am sure that whatever you do will be right, and I have faith in your ability to do anything you attempt. Now, may I come in, or must I wait until another time?"

They were at the door of the big house where Janet and her friends had an apartment.

"I won't ask you to come in now, for I'm tired and, I'm afraid, cross, and besides Nancy has some friends coming to dinner; girls from the League; but we'll put a plate on for you to-morrow, if you'll be in at six. I don't want you to go away, fancying me cross with you," she added, shyly.

"No, dear, I won't," he said.

The little word slipped out unawares. He said good-bye, and was gone. He did not know that he had called her dear, out loud; he was so used to calling her that in his thoughts. But it was really the first time that he had ever said it, in Janet's hearing; and she went in, and up, up, up, the four flights of stairs to the nest near the roof, with a warmer rose-flush in her cheek, and a quicker beating of her heart, not at all due to the stairs.

"He had no right to call me dear," she said, look-

ing at the other Janet in the mirror over her dressing bureau.

“But you liked it,” said the other Janet swiftly answering her with shining eyes. It was true.

XII

IN AN EDITOR'S OFFICE

ONE may plan for herself, and ask advice of her friends, and lead an anxious life lest her plans miscarry, while all the while, events are shaping themselves in ways better than one has dared to hope. Janet pondered Mr. Earnshaw's counsel and Mr. Fuller's opposition to it, counted the few dollars in her purse, remembered that the manse had done its best for her in sending her North, and decided that she could afford anything better than to fail. Nancy, who had a business head on her shoulders, said little. It was never Nancy's habit to make promises, but those who knew her, were aware that she was not slow in doing, even if she were reticent in speech. Among Nancy's sources of income, one that paid her very generously, was an engagement to make illustrations for a fashion paper. Her accurate technique and her quick eye for single details, made her valuable in a periodical where current modes were shown, and therefore punctually as Monday morning came, Miss Wiburn and her portfolio of sketches appeared in the doorway of the editor's den. Nancy knew the solid comfort of a weekly income, and though she was receiving large prices for other occasional work, just at present her dependence was on the *Jewel* which fluttered into a host of country and city households every Saturday

morning. One day when Nancy found Miss Bliss, the editor, in need of an office assistant, to replace one about to be married, she asked that her friend might be tried. No, she had not had experience of the exact sort of work required, but she had brains, a good education, and thoroughness. Nancy was so sure that Janet was the very one for the position, that she prevailed upon Miss Bliss to appoint an interview, the result of which was that Janet was engaged on trial for a month, and was soon after ensconced at her desk in the *Jewel* office, every day from nine until four o'clock, at a regular salary of fifteen dollars a week.

Miss Bliss had a small inner sanctum to herself, where she read manuscript, wrote letters, and guided the policy of her magazine. Miss Ward was installed in a larger outer office, where the typist sat at her machine, and a boy in buttons dreamed away his time, or, excessively bored, rumped up his hair, and furtively read a novel under the lid of his desk, in the intervals of errands and orders.

There was no lack of work for the new assistant. She translated endless screeds from the French fashion papers and from letters which came in from Paris, she read endless proofs in the galley and in the page, and she frequently received callers, who were not permitted to intrude upon her superior in office. Many of these callers wore anxious faces, some wore threadbare garments as well. Janet grew interested in their stories, frankly told, or merely revealed by a hint or a word dropped half unconsciously. There was the timid, nervous, hesitating poet with the broad burr in his speech that spoke of Scotland, the

man who had the Highland gift of fancy and facility of expression in verse, but not an iota of the canny Scotsman's ability to get on in the world. Miss Bliss had nearly broken her heart so many times over the necessity of courteously refusing his lyrics and ballads, that now she absolutely refused to see him, and the task of dismissing him without offense fell to Janet. Many a time when she was compelled to stand as a barrier between the woman on the other side of the closed door and the anxious authors determined to see her and to exploit their wares, she was thankful for the manse training in tact and gentleness. The poet with his long hair thrown back from a pallid brow, and his long lean hands clutching desperately at a most forlorn hope, would take back his manuscript, thrust into his pocket to keep company with pawn tickets, and stalk despairingly forth. But Janet pitied him much less than she did the old ladies, who had decayed gentlewoman written all over their well-preserved black silken skirts and their black bonnets brightened up with a bunch of violets. They always carried reticules, and always treated Janet as if she were a child. And they invariably wore violets.

"My dear," said one of them, a quaint and serious woman with bits of white hair peeping from under a jaunty frizz of brown, "I cannot discuss my new serial with you. I insist upon seeing the editor herself. I have made it my rule not to present my business to a subordinate."

"Miss Bliss is so very busy this morning," Janet would say; "if you will excuse her, I will take charge of your manuscript and of any message."

"What is your name?" The question was abrupt, and loftily spoken.

"Janet Ward."

"Well, Miss Janet Ward, I wrote for the first number of the *Jewel* thirty years ago, and the editor who had it then always saw me and often consulted with me, but times and manners have changed. What family of Wards do you belong to, the New Jersey Wards or the Kentucky Wards?" The sweet patience of the youthful listener was beginning to mollify the sternness of the author who belonged to a bygone day and had not found it out, whose belief in her own powers no failures dampened.

"My father's people came from Western New York," Janet would say, aware that she must not commence a genealogical talk, or keep waiting the two or three others, who in the background were watching for their turn. Sometimes she wondered at the concentration which Miss Bliss was able to maintain, when just beyond her door, the constant tide of anxious folk surged in and out with flow and ebb. By degrees Janet learned the art of saying no in many different keys and inflections, but always politely, and she gradually learned too from the inside that an editor is not half so potential as the uninitiated think. Poor Miss Bliss had her own moments of trepidation when the stories she had thought so clever, fell flat on her public, when her publishers declared that she was spending too much money, or when despite every possible care, a glaring error crept into her columns and was not discovered until the magazine was on sale. Then too, she had to rack her brain for novelty, novelty, the

one unpardonable sin in the eyes of the counting room, being what was called, getting the paper into a rut. Many of the novelties introduced were regarded unfavorably in the homes where the *Jewel* was taken, but the publishers seldom appreciated that view, and so the editor kept on, with a new feature to-day, and another to-morrow, always on the alert for the new contributor, and always happiest when her magazine was well in advance of forthcoming fashions. The poor old contributors, drawing neatly folded packets out of rusty reticules had often not the ghost of a chance, though Miss Bliss commiserated them as much as Miss Ward did.

Both young women would have had greater compassion could they have followed these discouraged ladies home. One, the one whose brown artificial frizz was a part of her daring breakwater against the march of time, had a fixed income so tiny that it just sufficed to pay her room rent in the top floor of a handsome lodging-house. For daily food she depended on the scraps she could dispose of to editors, little old-fashioned, short stories, bits of description about decorative art, cozy corners, and floriculture. A fellow-lodger benevolently inclined wrote the editor of the *Jewel* a letter saying that Mrs. Yost was almost literally famishing and declaring that it would be a real charity to buy her articles even if they were never published.

This was of course an impossibility. Magazines are not issued on eleemosynary principles, and Miss Bliss was not an almoner. She shrugged her shoulders, and washed her hands of the whole aching, wearing responsibility. Not so the daughter of the

manse. The spectacle of an aged lady, well dressed in the remnants of an elegant wardrobe, proudly living in a good locality, yet vainly trying to support herself by a pen that had outlived its usefulness, appealed to her continually. She must find some way to help Mrs. Yost. The way she did find was characteristic of David Ward's daughter.

A letter was received by Mrs. Yost one day, from a lady who said she had heard of her. The lady did not reveal her identity. She wished to know about old New York, especially about the social customs of its earlier days, and could pay a small sum every week, only three dollars in fact, but she could promise it regularly for the next six months. The work was to be sent to B. M. every Friday, and payment for value received would be returned by the evening mail. The correspondent intimated her own authorship. The whole thing was an ingenious scheme evolved by three clever girls.

"Three dollars is such a pittance, Nancy," said Janet when the scheme was finally approved in conclave by the three who had resolved to keep the wolf from old Mrs. Yost's threshold, and spare her pride as well.

"It will be enough for the poor old soul," said Nancy. "Her room rent is assured, and with what little else she earns, our money will keep her in food. She can get a good dinner at a respectable restaurant for twenty-five cents and she will feel quite independent and able to buy her breakfasts and suppers with the rest. But you and Mary and I, will every week hereafter have to go without a dollar's worth of something. That will be our secret."

"I don't mind," said Mary.

"Nor I," said Janet. "It is the greatest relief that I haven't to fancy that poor old woman starving as well as disappointed."

Janet was able to report with a smile not long after that Mrs. Yost had sent word to the *Jewel* office that for the present she would have little time to devote to possible orders, as she had undertaken an important piece of literary work which would occupy her for several months.

"Bless her heart," was the comment of Theodore Fuller. "She's finding out how fine it is to have a steady job."

Mr. Earnshaw took most of the work Janet had left with him and sent her a check so generous that she fairly danced for joy. That night they had ice cream and orange sherbet for dessert in the Colony, Janet's treat. When anybody had a bit of unexpected good luck, it was the rule that that person should make a feast for the rest.

The great editor frowned a little when he heard of Janet's office work. He shook his gray head with decision.

"I don't like it," he said. "We do not set a thoroughbred to do the work of a cart-horse. You'll lose your spontaneity, my dear. I'd rather you took my way, and went about and got hold of incident and local color and atmosphere. Fifteen dollars a week is very well in its place, but you could make three times that money if you became the favorite on a big daily paper, the one writer who could be depended on for hits and paragraphs, and the sort of clever story that only a bright-eyed woman can furnish upon call."

"Yes, Mr. Earnshaw, but there would be weeks when I couldn't write. There are dull and dry and profitless weeks when there isn't a thought in my brain; then I wouldn't have a cent to the good at the end of the week."

"Very possibly, but you would have brilliant weeks to balance the stupid ones and you would learn to be dominant over your moods. You would discover as every regularly employed newspaper writer does, that when you have a thing to do, you can do it. Why, Miss Ward, seven young women out of ten can help Josephine Bliss on the *Jewel* just as well as you do, so you are keeping one of that seven out of her work; you can do better. Give up the profitless routine. Trust in yourself and in Providence."

"I will, Mr. Earnshaw, at the end of six months, after Miss Bliss has had her vacation."

"Very well. Tell Miss Wiburn that she must look out for somebody to step in when you step out. Oh, I know Nancy. She's another girl I'm vexed with, selling her birthright in drawing frocks and hats and whimsical caprices for embroidery, when she should be doing something big."

"My father says," flashed Janet, "that nobody ever does a big thing well, who isn't able to do a hundred little things perfectly."

That lazy office boy was on Janet's conscience too. A girl with five brothers is interested in boys. She talked to him, found that his mother was dead and his father had married again, and that he had a sort of home with a sister. Janet coaxed him to go to an evening school, but he was obdurate. So she took

his case to one who was gradually becoming her confidant in most things, Mr. Fuller.

"A boys' club will be the thing in his life to rouse him up. Suppose you and I go down to Avenue A and pay his sister a visit, Janet. We can then learn something of his home, and the gang he goes with. You consider Frank an honest boy?"

"Honest, but not faithful. The very alphabet of faithfulness is unknown to him. He tries to do as little as he possibly can, and he's always begging for another half dollar a week on his wages. Part of his duty is to keep the office clean. I wish you could see how dirty it is."

"Boys have not very high ideals of cleanliness, and Frank's home may not give him any stimulant towards shining paint and speckless floors."

"Shall we ask any one to go with us, Theodore?" said Janet.

"No, please," replied the young man decidedly. "It is next to scaling Gibraltar with a step-ladder to get you by yourself for an hour. Don't you suppose I ever want to see you alone, dear?"

Janet blushed. She was beginning to feel a good deal of pleasure in the occasional half hours which she could spend with Mr. Fuller, but with a perversity which piqued him, she made these half hours very few. Janet was a puzzle to herself in her feeling about this friend, and she treated him more distantly than she did others who called at the Colony, as Nancy and the rest had named their home, perhaps because she really liked him better. She was frankly genial with most men as a girl brought up on equal terms with her brothers usually is, but when

Theodore Fuller became in the least insistent she repelled him, by her aloofness.

"What does ail Janet to be so mean to Mr. Fuller?" said one of the girls, and another echoed it, but the good elder sister who chaperoned the crowd had an explanation ready.

"She's just afraid of growing fond of him, and he's a little bit too timid with her."

"Yes and there's another thing; Janet has no time for love, she's so wrapped up in her writing. And she's found that she does not like being cooped up in an office reading proof. I hope she'll drop that irksome routine soon."

The streets were slippery and wet with a driving rain when Janet made her sortie under Mr. Fuller's escort to find the home of Frank Heneage. When they left the car and struck into Avenue A Janet was in a very different neighborhood from that which she left up-town. There were saloons on the corners, lighted and cheery looking in the eyes of men whose homes were in the stuffy tenements that rose high on every side. Though the rain fell, young men and women were out, walking close together in intimate converse. They had no other place than the street to do their courting in. Oddly enough the thought that in this the situation was not unlike his own, struck Theodore, just as it occurred to Janet. A warm flush mounted to her cheek, and his eyes sparkled, but neither told the other the suggested similarity. Theodore would not have dared, and Janet would have been resentful. One may think what one cannot translate into words. As they crossed a street a drunken man lurched heavily along

and Theodore, without asking permission, drew Janet's hand within his arm. She smiled at the quick and imperative motion, smiled again, for it was the custom of the quarter. The tall young man in clerical garb, and the girl in rain coat and toque, were walking along like any other sweethearts. Old women in the windows, a good many of whom recognized Mr. Fuller, gazed after them approvingly.

"It's a foine lookin' couple they'll make, Mrs. McGonigle," said Mrs. O'Hare to her neighbor, and the other nodded her head sagely.

Frank's sister's flat was up three flights in a rear tenement. She was at home, alone, her babies asleep, her husband, as she did not explain, at the public house, drinking up a score that would count heavily on his week's wages,—her brother somewhere about the streets.

"'Deed and it's meself is very worried over the bye."

"Does Frank pay you any board?" asked Mr. Fuller.

"He has but five dollars a week, and he gives me three. The rest he keeps for his clothes and his shoes and carfare and lunches."

"He seems badly off for clothes." Janet ventured timidly. Frank was threadbare.

"Well, he do be wasting too much of his money; he has no mother, and he'll not be moinding me."

"With two dollars a week for himself he should be tidy and comfortable." Janet recalled that it had never cost so much to clothe her nice clean wholesome brothers. Vividly the country boys, children of a Christian home, rose up in contrast with this

pale, sharp-featured and indolent Frank. She was sure that her father and mother would have known what to do with him. She didn't. But Mr. Fuller was tackling this job.

"It's simply this," Mr. Fuller's pleasant voice was as respectful as if he were addressing the first lady in the land. "Miss Ward has been watching Frank, and she thinks that he isn't getting on well. We want to help him to help himself. Will he come round to the Friendly Settlement and join in our work? We could get him into the Citizens' Club or the Young Americans, and he wouldn't spend evenings hanging around low theatres; I'm afraid that is what he is doing now."

Janet looked around. This was a three room home, the middle room where the sister and her husband slept was dark and ill ventilated. A mattress was spread on the floor for Frank, at night, in the kitchen. The sacred best room, pride of the good woman's heart had an ingrain carpet on the floor, a whatnot on which were vases and cheap china ornaments, a marble topped table, and four chairs; a plush covered rocker and a lamp with a gaudy shade, completed the furnishing. In good times this little room was as an altar to its mistress. In poor times when her man was out of work, the little ornaments, one by one, went to the pawn shop, and were pledged for a few pennies. Frank Heneage, in the office where he was employed, and where he received orders from ladies, and did errands for such gentlemen as were in the offices, adjoining that of the *Jewel*, had acquired a refinement of manner that could never have come from his home. But he was

the product of his environment. He had slept in bad air, eaten poor food, and played in the streets so long that he was idle in disposition, languid in physique, and self-indulgent through lack of training. Yet, when Janet and Theodore met him on their way out, his face lighted with pleasure, and he thanked them warmly for coming. It made him feel prouder.

"The boy's worth saving," said Theodore.

When they reached home, everybody but Nancy had gone to bed. She was sitting up with her chafing-dish, and she proceeded to concoct an oyster stew. Janet slipped away and changed her dress for one of soft white wool, with touches of blue in the garniture. Blue matched her eyes. Nancy busied herself with the spirit lamp, and bustled about making preparations for a little supper.

"You two stay in the drawing-room till I call you," she said.

"Let me help you, dear," called Janet.

"No, you would be in the way." She disappeared.

"Janet, in that gown, you make me think of the manse, and the girl I sometimes said good-bye to at the gate. I am always saying good-bye to you. I wish I might hope you would some time say come."

"I'll say it now, come to supper," she answered laughingly. "Why, Theodore!"

He detained her a moment. "It's earnest with me, Janet. Don't always put me off, and play with me. You are very capricious."

"Nobody ever said so before."

"I want to please you, Janet."

"Well, then don't be too serious."

On the table beside Janet's plate lay letters, the evening mail. One from her father, one from her mother, another from Miss Prescott, a fourth from Belle Nelson.

"I'll not read them all till to-morrow," she said. "If you'll allow me I'll open mother's to see if they are all well. Yes——" glancing hurriedly through it. "She sends her love to every one, including you, sir. Now I wonder why she should do that?"

Theodore took the teasing fingers that she shook at him, and lifted them to his lips. The more provoking she was, the more he was determined to win her for his own, this little lady of contradictions.

XIII

A GIRL COLONY

IT was not only in acts of kindness that Janet's days flew, nor did her sole duty as editor's assistant lie in taking care that her chief was not interrupted. Gradually she assumed more and more duties, until her work included writing short leaders, and answering correspondence, as well as attending to subordinate details. Every efficient worker goes through this experience. As one is proved capable and worthy, opportunities increase.

A question came up one day, in the publishing department of the house which issued the *Jewel*, as to the merits of a book, that had been presented for approval, and about which the readers disagreed. When two excellent judges of a book offer opinions that are contradictory in sentiment, publishers are puzzled. The book was about college life for girls, and Janet happened to pass through the counting room while it was under consideration.

"There is Miss Ward. She knows a good deal about this subject, and will be able to tell us whether this is or is not a fair description of the college of to-day; let her read it," said one of the gentlemen, and the request was made. Janet did the work delightedly. She not only enjoyed the function of a critic, but found herself able to tell why she liked or did not like the story, and to forecast its success with

the portion of the reading public to whom it would appeal. And she was able to do her work quickly. The result was that in a few months, she was able to resign her post in the office, and accept another, that of reader to the house, one of the staff who decided upon books that were sent in by the ever-increasing world of writers. This did not come until by repeated occasional services, she had proved her fitness. Then the publishers had said,

"It is easy to procure another assistant on the *Jewel*, and here is a young woman who can give us what we seek in another department."

So that without her asking, the new work was opened to Janet. The first suggestion was that she do it at a desk in the office, but she was averse to undertaking there, seriously, work that required analysis, insight, and reflection, and she stipulated that she should do it at home.

Now, for Janet, began what she afterwards referred to as her Bag Days. Every evening, a messenger left at her door, a bulky leather bag, securely locked. When opened, out from its capacious depths, came thick typewritten manuscripts or others less legible, written in script, sometimes black and firm, sometimes pale and indistinct; advance sheets of volumes to be issued on the other side of the ocean, and the various flotsam and jetsam that comes to a publishing house. Each morning the same messenger called, to take away the books which Janet had read, with her opinions thereof, and now began for her, another grind, different from, but not less exacting than the one she had left.

"I am reading," she wrote to her father, "about

ten books a week, never less, often more. Poetry, philosophy, history, finance, fiction, whatever happens along, comes to my hand, and I make an attempt to say something intelligent about it. But you know there are limits to my ability."

"I should think so," ejaculated Mr. Ward, in the silence of his study. "What can the child know of finance or philosophy? I wish she would grow tired of New York, and come home. Darling!" he called to his wife, who was busy about her work downstairs, "come up here and talk awhile."

And the two had a talk which ended in a prayer.

Janet was often comforted and strengthened when she was tired out by continuous mental effort, by the knowledge that, at least, twice a day, in the Tennessee manse, she was remembered by name in prayer. When wafts of peace and blessing come to any of us, we know not how, may it not be that some one God loves, is interceding for us?

In the busy hive where Janet had a cell, every girl was a toiler. Most of them had gone through the preliminary stages of searching and choosing, and had settled upon the wage-earning work for which she was suited. Most of these girls had, also, as Janet had not, having had Nancy for her pioneer, gone through the forlorn quest for a foothold in some decently comfortable boarding house. No young woman, coming, a stranger, to a great city, who has undertaken this struggle for a place within her means and not too remote from her work, but knows how dreary it is, and how her heart sinks as she prosecutes her search. Armed with a list, furnished by the Young Woman's Christian Association,

or culled from the advertising columns of the newspapers, the girl sets forth. On the outside, a boarding house may look not less agreeable nor more repellent than a private house where a family is making a home. But, once within the doors, boarding houses are singularly alike and peculiarly unsympathetic and impersonal in their aspect. Nothing more depressing than the drawing-room of a boarding house can be imagined, with its air of tarnished and faded state, its long floor space covered with a carpet on which geometrical figures or great garlands of roses predominate, its tables at intervals, its sets of furniture in hair-cloth or rep, and its pictures which suggest the auction room or the bargain counter. The girl mounts the steps to the front door, and is admitted to this reception room, by a boy in buttons or a neat maid, as it happens, and her heart sinks to her shoes with the ticking of the clock on the mantel. In her modest purse, she has a certain sum. She knows, to a penny, how much she can afford to spend for board and lodging, and if it is anywhere from seven to ten dollars a week, she fancies it ought to insure her a room of moderate size, warmed and lighted, and the comforts of a home. In the country village, from whence the young girl came, five dollars a week would have gone far to this end. But in New York, she discovers that for her, few doors are hospitably open. She is much less welcome than her brother would be, and unless she is willing to share a room with another girl, her choice is limited. Indeed, it narrows itself to a choice between hall bedrooms in different localities, almost invariably, three or four flights up.

From the necessities of the case, a few years ago, the crowds of young women drawn to the city by the demands of study or work, began to found their girl colonies, of which many are now in flourishing existence. They are carried on along cooperative lines. A number of girls, congenial in tastes and of similar upbringing, combine, rent an apartment, furnish it as best they can, and go to housekeeping. One of them has a mother or an aunt who is at liberty to give her presence as chaperone; and a dozen girls settle down into a life that is at once stimulating, charming, and comparatively inexpensive, as the cost of everything is rigidly footed up and precisely divided between the residents.

Furniture is odd and incongruous, for part of it comes out of grandmothers' garrets, some from girls' own rooms at home, and a part from the rummaging of second hand shops. Girls are quick in accommodating themselves to their environment, and they have a genius for makeshifts. An old kitchen stove does duty as a dressing table, masquerading under ruffles and frills; a bath tub is covered with a board and a rug, during the day, and thus furnishes a seat for the girl who has drawing or writing; a divan is, of course, an honorable sofa, by day, and a comfortable bed by night.

Janet felt as if she were back at Lucas, when, at the table, she saw several of her old classmates daily; when Nancy's room was next hers; and Miss Prescott, tarrying in town for a few days, was tucked away in a cozy corner, and made as much of as if she had been a queen. In a girl colony there is endless elasticity; room for one more may always be

counted on, and the table may be relied on, to provide space for another plate.

Nancy had a studio in a building down-town, and was taking orders for pictures and for something still more interesting, the decoration and proper furnishing of artistic homes. People told her how much money they wished to spend, and she undertook to make their houses beautiful, giving them the benefit of her trained eye and taste.

Elizabeth Evans said, when hearing that a many times millionaire had given Nancy a contract to take entire charge of the interior of his new country house on the Sound,

“What did I tell mother, Janet, long ago? Don’t you remember? I said that Nancy would be at the top of the ladder, long before the rest of us.”

Elizabeth was in town to buy her trousseau. She was to be married to her far away cousin Tom, who had given up other plans and become partner in the mills. One night, the girl colony invited her, and her mother, and her great Aunt Sarah, to dinner, a new experience to them, though they had been at fine entertainments in their time. The china was pretty, though bizarre; the girls’ supply of silver was strictly individual, but their plated ware made a brave show, and their dinner was delicately cooked and plentiful, as it needed to be, for working girls have healthy appetites.

In the evening, after dinner was over, friends dropped in, quite informally, and they had music and a good deal of bright conversation. Janet’s nightly bag came in for a moment’s scrutiny as the ladies were donning their wraps to go home.

"Haven't you opened it yet?" said Mrs. Evans.

"No, I thought I'd wait until morning."

"I would look, if I were you, Janet," said Nancy.

She did, and was glad she had followed the advice, for there was a thin printed volume marked "Special," and a request for an opinion by to-morrow morning.

"How can you do it?" Great-aunt Sarah, who belonged to the era when women did everything in a leisurely and elegant way, was simply aghast at such haste.

"Oh," said Janet, "one can always do what must be done, but I'll sleep on it. I'll get up very early to-morrow morning. My literary opinion would be worth nothing to-night."

"Well, the girls of the present day are a good deal in advance of the girls of my generation," was Great-aunt Sarah's comment, as she stepped into the carriage that waited to convey her party home.

One morning the letters beside Janet's plate at breakfast, were two that possessed a deeper than common interest for her. The first was from her friend, Mr. Fuller, announcing his call to a downtown church. Hitherto, he had been engaged in mission work and as a pastor's assistant, now, he was to be a pastor, with a parish having definite claims on his most strenuous endeavor. He had decided to accept the call, and his whole heart was in the new and waiting field. Janet's own pulses throbbed more quickly as she read his words. Between the lines she felt the note of confidence, almost too assured, that whatever he should do, was of

great interest and concern to her. The second letter was from Belle Nelson.

"Nancy," called Janet, "Theodore is to be pastor of the church in M—— Street. I'm glad. Aren't you?"

"Very glad. He's served a faithful apprenticeship. He'll bring his best endeavors to bear on whatever he undertakes. And I'm glad too, for you, my dear. I believe the Lord meant you to be a minister's wife."

"For the present it is enough that I am a minister's daughter; I'm not sufficiently consecrated, yet, for the other situation. And I think an unmarried minister is much the more popular. A wife may be a help, but she may be also a handicap. The ministers I've seen, Nancy, who might have stayed in one congregation all their days, if it hadn't been for their wives!"

"Mr. Fuller," said a young lady who was sitting in a corner of the room, busy with some needlework, and whom neither of the others had observed, "is said to be engaged to a young lady in Charlotte, Virginia. I heard it at the springs, last summer. He's devoted to her, my friends told me, and writes to her every day. If he marries a Southerner, she'll captivate his people. They are so fascinating, those sweet voiced Southern girls, with their gentle, dependent ways."

"Ways that are superficial, so far as dependence goes," said Nancy, speaking rapidly. "For pluck, energy, and resolution, for downright ability to take care of herself, and the talent, the genius for getting on in the world, commend me to the Southern

woman. The Western, the New England, even the New York girl is manifestly her inferior in the qualities that command success. Every man she meets serves her, and the apparent challenge she makes on his chivalry is a factor in her reaching of the goal. Those Southern women are very winning, and are no novelty to Mr. Fuller, but I don't *think* he's engaged to one of them."

"I have a letter," said Janet composedly, "from a friend who knew Mr. Fuller before I did. And that's why I want to consult you, Nancy. Belle tells me that she is coming to New York to stop for a few days before going abroad. Do you think we could manage to put her up here?"

They turned themselves into a committee of ways and means, and finally arranged that Janet should room with Nancy and give up her quarters to Belle. The girl who had told them of Theodore Fuller's supposed engagement, meanwhile, picked up her belongings and hurried off to keep an appointment with a teacher of design.

"I am going to England and France for six months," wrote Mrs. Nelson, "to join my cousins, who are residing, at present, in Surrey, and to travel with them. I have had doubts about leaving the children, but my dear father insists upon it, and as they are under the care of a dear Aunt May, who is very fond of them, and of the good old Mammy Lucy, who brought me up, I shall leave them in very good care. As for myself, I have reached a crisis where I must rest or die. I am here in my old sweet home, with my girlhood's friends around me, yet I am wretched. I pine for the cabin on the hillside, and I

seem to hear Tim calling me from the shadowy woods. I have grown morbid."

"Fiddlesticks!" ejaculated Nancy. "I thought she had more sense. Tim!" she muttered with contempt. "Tim! Why, he abused her."

"He is dead, dear, and therefore helpless. Don't let's mention him. But Belle is idealizing him. She is weaving a halo round him that would make him uncomfortable, if he were alive. It would be such a fearful misfit. We'll proceed. Belle goes on,

"A few weeks ago, the desire for the mountains so overmastered me, that I left the children with mammy, and went to see Tim's mother. I stayed with her a week. You know, Janet, she was always very kind to me. She was pleased to have me come, but a bit relieved when I went away. I don't belong to her world any more, and I think I needn't try to fancy that I do. I shall let her see the children, sometimes, but she flatly refuses to leave her home, and visit me, and I couldn't make her happy while I am in my father's house. Being so near, I went to see your father and mother, Janet, and I spent a Sabbath in the manse."

Janet softly clapped her hands.

"Go on, do, child," said Nancy.

"The manse is queer without you, but you should peep in unsuspected and see your father and mother. Lovers always, of course, they are more the devoted pair now than ever. Mrs. Ward is not very strong. I fancied her more willowy and whiter than she used to be, yet she protested that she was well, and certainly she was cheerful. Your dear father is busy, working tremendously, full of a passion for soul-

saving, and how the mountain men love him. He can do what he likes with them. Two of your brothers were there, sturdy and fine laddies. One of them, Ralph I think, says he is going to be a farmer, and live on the land; he is not so bookish as the rest of you, and Mr. Ward is going to buy him a saw-mill. Mr. Ward helped me, Janet. He seems to understand my feelings, and he does not think me wicked. I put up a little stone at poor Tim's grave, saw that our old house was secure from wind and weather, and came away. I'll find a tenant for it by and by. You know your father has taken a good deal of interest in some of those very poorest people who live near the mines, and he's had a good many weddings among them. I am rambling along. I came back and found that Doctor Huntoon had been writing to my father that I needed change and must break from my old moorings, for awhile. So I'm going to Europe. And, as I'm homesick for you, and wish to see what a girl colony is like, I want to be your guest. By the way, I hope I shall see all the other friends, when I am there."

"Janet, what Ruth Adams, who always gets things wrong, said about Theodore's engagement is a mistake. I'm sure he would tell us so, if we should ask him."

Janet smiled. "I do not think it concerns us, Nancy. If he chooses to be silent about it, why should we investigate? Ruth spoke very convincingly." Janet in her heart knew it was a mistake.

"Probably it is another of the Fuller boys, of whom she heard," continued Nancy.

"It does not at all matter to me," replied Janet, decidedly. Here too she was perverse.

"It should, my dear," maintained Nancy. "For you and Theodore have been such friends."

"Friends I hope we shall remain," said Janet with dignity, as though to close the subject. "Now, for my Bag of Fortunatus. I wonder what treasure trove I'll chance upon, to-day. By the by, I am engaged by the *Tribune* to report the Federation meetings, Nancy. Did I tell you?"

"Are you, indeed? That's a good beginning in journalistic work, Janet."

"I shall do my best. I hope, Nancy, that Belle Nelson was mistaken in thinking mother not quite well. It may be that I ought to give up everything, and run away home."

XIV

DISAPPOINTMENT AND HOPE DEFERRED

AT the appointed time, Belle Nelson arrived, and before she had spent two days in their company, every girl in Janet's circle was at her feet. Belle's beauty, which the hardships and sufferings of her wifehood had scarcely eclipsed, had bloomed out superbly since she had again entered upon the life that was hers by right of birth. She was dressed in black, with white at throat and wrists, and a narrow white border, indicating her widow's estate, in her hat, but she had discarded a long crape veil, and wore only a short one over her face. Her carriage, always fine, gave her a marked distinction. People turned to look after her on the street. She was in the flower of woman's finest age, not quite thirty, and though she thought her story was ended, it was, in very truth, just beginning. For Janet, she brought photographs of her little Donald and of Janet's namesake, and what Janet was sure to prize most, a picture of the two dearest ones at the manse, taken by her own camera.

"Your mother needs you," she said, when they were sitting together in Janet's room in dressing-gown and slippers, in that confidential hour of brushing hair, and getting ready for bed, when women are wont to grow familiar and intimate. "No, she didn't send the message, and she wouldn't tell you

herself, but you'll have to go to her soon, dear, for awhile, at least."

"Father has written of nothing alarming."

"There is nothing alarming. There is a wanness, a shrinking, an etherealization, Janet, that I don't like. I'll tell you what I would think ideal. Go for the little mother, and bring her here, if you cannot leave your work. I see how absorbing the work is, yet Janet, we never have a mother twice."

"She wouldn't care for this, the strain would tire her. She couldn't bear the intensity of it. This life here, with all the girls going and coming, the effervescence and jollity and the stir of all that is happening would not suit mother."

Janet rose and paced the floor. It was a trick she had caught from her father long ago. The room was small, so she could not walk far before turning.

"You make me think of a caged up thing, Janet; sit down, please."

"Pardon me, Belle dear, it's been this way from the very earliest days of my recollection. We have all always thought first of the little mother. Father would say when we were children, 'Cannot you relieve your mother?' She has been the pivot of the household machinery. Now my earnings are increasing, Belle, and I am just where I have conquered a good starting point. What I make helps them down there. With father's hard work and his indifference to money they have always had to skimp and scrape, till I learned almost to loathe economy. I am able to do so much for mother here, I shall be able to do so much less if I make a break. Do you see?"

"I see," said Belle, and changed the subject. Lying

awake that night, it returned to her hauntingly. She felt though she could not altogether explain it that if Janet did not go back to the manse, she would be sorry. Belle had learned to dread the aftermath of sorrow. Yet surely Janet's father would send for her if she ought to go home.

New York was a delight to Belle. She enjoyed the panoramic streets, the park, the crowds which were processional from morning till night, the tall buildings, the elevated roads, and the museums and art galleries. Her stay was brief, but it was crowded with pleasures, and she was long enough in town to accompany the rest of his friends to Mr. Fuller's installation.

Janet had not abated her kindness of manner to the young clergyman, but she was more than ever elusive. When he called she was busy or absent-minded or absorbed, and she managed subtly and intangibly to put their intercourse on a plane that had a certain remoteness. Her attitude baffled and puzzled him for there was nothing in it of which he could complain and yet it was as chilling as if she had been a snow maiden with daily reinforcements from the pole. Being proud, and a hater of injustice, he resented her behavior, and yet knew not how to show displeasure, for he was quietly placed where he had no rights. Meanwhile, Janet was much more cordial than heretofore to several other men who were in their circle, and she gave a quite flattering attention to a young physician who had been a chum of Mr. Fuller's brother Frank at college.

"What she sees in Ed Caldwell," thought Theodore ruefully, "I cannot fathom. I am sure Janet is

not a coquette. I don't like to think that she is merely amusing herself with us all."

The fact was that as yet Janet's heart had not been deeply touched by any one. She had given no real credence to Ruth's bit of gossip, but it had sown in her mind the thistle seed of a doubt. How little, she said to herself, did she know of Mr. Fuller's past; or how many young women he had known before he had met her; she did not believe him engaged, but she fancied that he might have some very intimate old friend to whom he wrote, from whom he heard. It was an evidence of love if she had chosen to recognize it, that she was furious at the thought of this, and angry that she had allowed him to say now and then a tender word to her. Nancy looking on, thought Janet very cross and wrong, and said so to Mrs. Nelson and to Elizabeth Evans, but the former advised standing aside. "Leave them to settle their own affairs, it will surely come out right," she said.

Janet was sipping the sweetest cup that can come to the lips of youth, the cup of a swift literary success. Not long was she to spend her time plodding through the pages of drearily platitudinal essays, and abortive fiction, it would soon be too valuable for this, and it was evident that space writing on a daily was also too slow and too dissipating a task for her. Mr. Earnshaw sent for her; she found him in his den, enveloped as usual in a cloud of smoke, out of which his face beamed in friendly welcome. He addressed her like a father and an autocrat combined.

"My child, you must get away from New York, from the grind of the mechanical work you are do-

ing, you must set yourself to writing stories; seriously you are wasting your youth. Go somewhere to the country, shut yourself up, and be true to your better self."

Coming out of Mr. Earnshaw's office at the very corner where once she had met Mr. Fuller, she met him again. That corner seemed fateful in their destiny. As she saw him she would have turned away, but he lifted his hat and joined her. There had come over him a determination to have the thing out with her, whatever it was, and when a man makes up his mind to that cause, a woman he loves has no escape, she may as well yield gracefully to the inevitable.

"I am heartily, thoroughly happy over that last story of yours, Janet," he began. "It is fine, it shows thought, genius; there is something in it which is of the spirit, which I always knew was in you. I cannot begin to tell you, dear, how pleased I am, and how proud that everybody is talking about you."

They were walking across the City Hall Park. Though crowds were all around, the two were just then as isolated as if in the middle of a desert.

Janet had melted at his praise. Praise is always welcome. But she froze when he said dear. He observed it, and boldly charged against her fortress.

"Janet, why may I not say 'dear' to you?" he asked. "For the last year I have been courting you, I have been trying by every means in my power to show you that I love you, and to win your love, but you obstinately hold yourself apart, and will none of my advances. Dear, dearest, you must listen to me now, if it is in the street and with crowds around.

What have I done to make you hate me? Why won't you at least be fair and give me a chance? You know Janet Ward, that I love you."

All this went on, low-toned, rapid, vehement. A sudden smile crossed Janet's face; she had never thought her lover at all like her father, but this impetuous onset was quite in Dave Ward's manner. It won upon David Ward's daughter. She decided to be frank in her turn. They were now walking together up Broadway.

"Mr. Fuller," she said, "have you the right to address me, as you are doing?"

"Heavens and earth, Janet, what do you mean? Why should I not have the right? Please explain."

"I heard accidentally some time ago, that you were engaged to a girl in Virginia."

"And you believed it? I am ashamed of you. I am almost angry with you. I did not deserve this, Janet, that you should suppose me capable of infidelity and of lack of honor. I repeat it, Janet, I am not almost but in very truth vexed."

Indeed he looked so. His mouth was firmly set and a shadow had fallen on his face. For an instant Janet felt a tremor pass through her. A woman loves a man none the less for feeling a little in awe of him. In the instant that Janet lifted her eyes and beheld sternness where hitherto she had seen only admiration, she was attracted; in the low reproachful tone that had till now been all softness and pleading, there was something that caught at her heart strings. Suddenly she was vanquished. Most true women are captivated by masterfulness in men. Few brides

wish the word obey omitted from the marriage ceremony.

She put her hand lightly and for a fleeting instant on his arm.

"Don't be angry, please," she said, and his countenance lightened at once.

"It wounds me that you could have entertained an unworthy thought of me," he said. "I at least supposed that I had won your respect."

Janet was silent. They walked on several blocks without further conversation. Then he spoke again.

"It occurs to me, Janet, that I have not denied this absurd, this most preposterous charge. I have never cared for any girl in the world but yourself. There are a good many Fullers, for we are a clan, and several of us are engaged. I am not the only clergyman in the family, as I think you know, and Theodore with us is a favorite name. My cousin Theodore Harris Fuller, who lives in the southwest, is engaged to a young lady in Charlotte, Virginia, and rumor has confused me with him."

"Don't be so annoyed, Theodore," Janet said again, and this time he smiled outright.

"I'll try not to be, if you will say as you ought, 'please forgive me.'"

"Please forgive me, dear," she said.

"And you will return my love? Will you one of these days be my wife?"

They were still walking on Broadway. People passing observed only a handsome pair of young people, both in the heyday of their years. Nobody caught a word of their talk, but when Janet shyly said yes, the street corner grew luminous to Theo-

dore and that part of Broadway looked to him like heaven itself.

"My darling," he murmured, and they boarded a car, and went home to Nancy, to whom Theodore said, "Congratulate me; Janet has surrendered."

But Nancy had no returning smile at the moment. A telegram had arrived, and in Janet's absence she had opened it, this being their rule. And this was what it had said: "Mother ill. Janet must come home at once."

Janet was filled with dismay and self-reproach. She felt that Belle had warned her, and that she had not heeded the warning. Belle herself was the first to reassure her. "Remember, dear," she said, "that your father is not one to put off decision, or to deliberate, and if Mrs. Ward wants you, the telegraph is quicker than the mail. I think you will find that she does want you very much, but that there is no pressing danger." Belle was so convincing in her tender insistence that Janet accepted her view. Meanwhile she was by the way of realizing the support there is in having a man devoted to one's personal comfort, and ready to take care of one in an emergency. Mr. Fuller took the responsibility of getting her tickets, attending to her luggage, and relieving her from every anxiety that he could lift. She decided to go by the midnight train and he accompanied her to the station. Belle who was to sail for Liverpool the next day, said good-night early in the evening and Nancy thought that the lovers should have some final words to themselves, so she kissed her friend and whispered her last loving wishes in Janet's own room before she left.

In the carriage, Janet turned to Mr. Fuller with eyes that were tragic in their look of sorrowful regret.

"You know, dear, if anything happens to mother, it will be my fault."

"I am sure you are entirely blameless about her illness, Janet. You have not been there."

"That is exactly it. I have been selfish and heartless, thinking of my own career, and leaving her alone without her daughter. If mother is taken away, I shall never forgive myself."

Theodore recognized the futility of argument with one nervous and overstrained, and did not oppose her; instead he took her hand, and held it in a firm, cool pressure that carried tranquillity better than speech at that moment.

"And Theodore," she went on, "if dear mother does not get well, everything between us must end. I am sure of that."

"I am not sure of that, Janet."

"We must just let everything be as it was before this afternoon, Theodore. We must forget it. Think of the heartlessness of a daughter who became engaged when her mother was in such danger as mine is. It is shocking. I could not endure my own cruelty, if I suffered such a thing to go on."

Theodore bowed. She was unreasonable and contradictory and altogether trying, but she was his, and most womanly though provoking. "A little willful rose set round with thorns."

"Suppose we leave it now, dearie, you are too tired to think, and anyhow, things look far worse at night than they ever do in the morning. Wait a little."

"I shall never see it differently, Theodore, unless, dear, mother gets well." Janet spoke with great firmness.

"We will pray that she may soon recover. I am not so discouraged as you are. Why not look on the bright side? Try, Janet."

They separated, and Theodore on the platform watched the train speed away. Janet flying southward was in a state of mingled grief and hope. With many young women she experienced a certain reluctance against the bond of betrothal, and though taken by surprise she had conceded her lover's claim, yet she was not quite prepared to give up her freedom. We are not betrothed was her last thought before the motion of the train lulled her to rest; somehow she clutched at a respite, a reprieve, and her lover, sitting in his den at home, vaguely comprehended her feeling. He wrote a line in his diary before he slept. "A great joy and a partial disappointment have signalized this day."

He held himself bound in any event, though he mentally left Janet free until she was ready to be bound.

In marriage, for both parties, there must be a common service that is perfect freedom.

XV

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

IN the tranquil years that eventually came to Janet and Theodore, they always looked back on this year of interrupted peace, as their period of storm and stress. Fortunately, at the time, both were too intensely busy to spend much thought in self-pity. Theodore had the absorbing occupations of a minister in a city parish with a rapidly increasing congregation, and Janet, once at home, found both hands full.

Mrs. Ward's fatal tendency to melancholy, held in abeyance so long by the resolution to combat its tyranny, and staved away, on a former occasion, by a timely change of scene, had returned like a giant armed. The delicacy, which Belle Nelson had noticed and feared, was the precursor of an attack less perilous to body than mind, and when Dr. Huntoon could not dissipate her moodiness nor lighten the cloud that her low spirits caused in the manse, nor build up the fragile, physical life, he took the step that common sense indicated, and bade Mr. Ward send for Janet. It was by his suggestion that the telegram had summoned her instead of the more deliberate mail.

"Is my wife in danger, Ralph?" asked Mr. Ward, whose strained countenance and hollow eyes showed

what anguish of watching and suspense he had been through.

"Not in immediate danger, David, but one can take no chances in a peril like hers. The border line between obstinate melancholia and insanity is very slight. I must have Janet here to rouse her mother, cheer you up, and introduce a new element. Janet is the only prescription I can administer with any hope in its efficacy. And I'm not meaning to trust alone to Janet. When your wife is able to be moved, I want you to send her away, either to some place where she has been very happy, in the past, or to an entirely new place. We'll try the remedial power of an entire change, after a while. Please God, we'll have the dear lady well again, by and by."

Janet received the warmest of welcomes from a group of the neighbors, who had stood, with sisterly devotion, around her mother, before this breakdown. One of them, in an hour's talk, one evening when Mrs. Ward had been coaxed to go for a drive with her husband, revealed something of the causes which had been too much for Mrs. Ward's slender strength.

"You see, Miss Janet, that your maw was too much by herself. Your paw was writing and reading and going off to preach, and your maw had lots of lonesome hours. Your big brothers and you away, and your little brother off in the woods with his gun, or fishing down by the brook, and not a soul to speak to her. She said to me one day, 'After a woman's fifty years old, there's nobody in the wide world needs her, and she ought to go away and hide herself.' That's what she was thinkin' of,

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I reckon, when she did go away and hide herself?"

"What do you mean?" gasped Janet.

"Why, didn't your paw ever tell you? It was in the spring, when the robins came back, and the woods were green, and the garden was perking up again, and your paw went off to a big ministers' meeting somewhere, and Mrs. Ward was more lonesome than ever. Mr. Ward begged her to go with him, but she wouldn't. She reckoned she didn't want to see so many strangers. So, he went, and she stood by the door and waved her hand after him, that pretty way she always had. And the days passed, four of them, and little Alec went off for a picnic, that last day, and when your paw came home, the door was open, and the fire was out, and there was nobody in the manse."

"Did not mother have any maid, Chloe, Lucy, Rosa, anybody? I remember those names, surely."

"Oh, sometimes she had a somebody and often a nobody. Just then, there was a Lucy, but your maw let her go for a holiday, soon as your paw's back was turned. Then, she slipped off with a book, to gather flowers and press them, and she didn't come back."

"Where was she?" Janet was horrified, it was all so out of character with her view of her mother.

"She was up in Tim Nelson's old cabin, fast asleep, when your father found her. He didn't startle her or express any surprise; he just said, 'Here you are, pet. Let's go home.' And she came home. The way I know is that my old man was one of them that helped Mr. Ward look for her, and he told me. He said he never saw anybody so patient as Mr.

Ward; he didn't believe there was anybody else like him, except the Lord."

Janet reflected. And as she thought it over, she became more and more indignant at her own strange blindness, at the absorption that had prevented her from observing the infrequency of her mother's letters, and from reading between the lines of her father's. Most of all, she was vexed that when Mrs. Nelson had tried to alarm her, she had been deaf to the intimation. She thanked her visitor, and governed face and voice, so that the good woman supposed her much less impressed with the recital than was the case. When she was alone, she went to her room, and wrote three letters.

The first was to Theodore, and was in the nature of a bomb shell.

"My dear friend," she began formally, "if you did not receive from me the thanks I ought to have spoken for your kindness in escorting me to the station, on the night I left New York, please accept my grateful acknowledgments, now. You were, as is your custom, most courteous, and I fear I was rude, beyond belief."

When Theodore received this, and had read thus far, he was very much mystified.

"What ails Janet, that she is so deadly, so crushingly polite," he mentally exclaimed.

Reading on, he soon reached the puzzle's solution.

"I have found my dear mother much stronger, physically, than the message allowed me to hope. But it would be better, if she were less strong in body and quieter in mind. She is suffering from a dreadful infliction of the depression which has dogged

her from her youth; she is not mentally unbalanced, yet, but is very, very near it. That she often sits silent for hours, with the tears dropping slowly down, that she refuses to talk to my father, who adores her and is broken-hearted, that she sometimes wanders away and hides herself, are all developments of the disease. She was, at first, pleased when she saw me, but not for long; on the second day, she coldly advised me not to waste any time on her, but to go back to my friends in the North.

“‘You have a brilliant destiny before you, Janet,’ she murmured. ‘Why did you come home? Did anybody send for you?’ I tried not to answer that question but she refused to let me evade it, and when she discovered that I had been sent for, she was very much displeased. Mother, whose amiability never used to be ruffled, was so vexed at my father at sending for me, that she refused to be appeased. ‘You may as well go back, Janet,’ she said. ‘I don’t want you. Go back and write your stories, and live your gay life. It is too doleful for you here.’

“I can’t begin to tell you, Theodore, how her gloom fills the manse. The cold, gray, creeping, folding fog that comes up from the sea and hides the land, is like it. Somehow, it is like a seizure from outside; it appalls one. Father is nearly beside himself when she is at the worst, and I am simply wild. I want to fly, to escape from it, but there is no escape.

“Once in a while, the darkness is lifted, and for a day or two, mother is her own sweet self. Dr. Huntoon declares it is all due to her bodily state, and says we needn’t mind, though she refuses to stay in

the room at family worship, or to go to communion because she insists that she is not a Christian, and has never been saved. *But I don't believe him.* I am afraid it is worse than he will tell us, and that worse is coming, and oh, Theodore! I am the one to blame. I have done it. I, with my going off, and leaving home, and trying to have a career. I should have stayed with father and mother. I am bitterly sorry and ashamed, and I shall never, never leave them again. The thing that hurts me most, is that I was so selfish, forgetting them, and letting you love me, and listening to you when father was nearly distracted with anxiety. Now, Theodore, forgive me, but consider that nothing has taken place between us. I set you free for two reasons, one, that I am not worthy any good man's love, being a heartless, selfish girl, who has not done her duty, and must therefore do penance, forevermore, and the other, because if there is even the faintest danger that my precious mother is becoming insane, I can, of course, never marry. So good-bye, Theodore. Take this as my last word. Good-bye, and forget me as soon as you possibly can. Please do."

Theodore read and reread the letter, folded it up and put it carefully away.

"My poor little love," he said to himself, "you've come to a very hard place in the road, but I'll certainly not accept a dismissal."

His answer to the letter was as resolute in its steadfastness, as Janet's, in its renunciation, and it did carry balm to her wounded spirit, though she was reluctant to admit its healing touch.

Nancy, who had courage enough for two women,

made up her mind to shut up her studio for a month, and go to Janet's aid, a decision which was easier for her to make than it could have been earlier. For she was at a parting of the ways, where she was leaving her former work, and taking orders for some of greater importance, and she needed a breathing-spell.

In her letter to Nancy, Janet told of her mother's unrelenting endeavors to promote the social life of the people around her, until she had given out in strength. It seemed, that she had been exhausting herself in trying to bring together, in friendly association, women who were quite contented to jog on as their mothers and grandmothers had. Through it all, Nancy saw, as Janet had seen, that Mrs. Ward had been lonely. She too, felt that the too muchness of life had wrought ill for the fragile woman, who had needed her daughter, yet had not asked her to return. But Nancy had no blame for Janet.

Elizabeth's answer to Janet's letter, was in the shape of a great box, packed with everything that an invalid could enjoy, and by express, a few days later, she sent dainty packets of perfumery, a white dressing sacque, profusely trimmed with lace, and a pretty bonnet and wrap, all for Mrs. Ward, and all so bewitchingly feminine that to the immense astonishment of husband and doctor, they did what neither love nor science had done, they created a diversion. To Janet, she wrote crisply, "Tom and I are of the same opinion. Your mother must come to Dene's Mills as soon as ever she is able to bear the journey. For pity's sake, Janet Ward, pull yourself together, and don't you give up to the dominion of the blues. And now let me tell you. Tom and I

have been to hear Theodore preach. There was a crowd that would have delighted your eyes. Every pew in his church is taken. You have to go early to get a seat. And, for the life of me, Janet, I don't see why they go, for Theodore is not at all pyrotechnic. He preaches the plainest, simplest gospel, and without any frills or eloquence. But he's a man, and Tom says he's Christ's man. Did you ever dream that Tom Evans once longed to be a minister, but had to give it up, and be a business man instead? Well, I would have made a fearful failure as a minister's wife, but, I fancy, I'll get on pretty well as Tom's, for the fact is old Tom suits me precisely. Father, by the way, sends his love to your father, and wonders if it isn't time for Mr. Ward to take a furlough. Then, if he would consent, you could all come up to Dene's Mills for a good long visit. Mother joins in the hope that this may be the way out of your present distresses."

Nancy Wiburn had met a wonderfully good friend, who did more than materially assist her. This she did without stint, giving her large orders, and recommending her to friends, but not resting here. Back to the hill country of Pennsylvania, this friend went on a quest that at first appeared utterly hopeless, for what faint glimmer of reason was there to anticipate the finding, kith and kin, for Nancy, after all these years. On what Mrs. Archer, this patron of Nancy's, based her prediction that the mystery of Nancy's parentage should be made clear, it would have been difficult for anybody to discover. Once in awhile, intangibilities are firmer than the rock strata of the real. Visiting a summer resort, in the neigh-

borhood where Nancy's childhood had been spent, the lady had seen, beside a cottage door, a woman sewing. The woman had lifted her eyes, and their dark depths, the straight brows, the square chin, had reminded Mrs. Archer of Nancy, "trusty, dusky, vivid, true." They had talked together. Mrs. Archer had found that this woman, older by ten years than Nancy, was an orphan of that long ago flood, when her father, mother, brother, and little sister, had perished.

"You remember your father?"

"Oh, yes," said the woman.

"What was he? Who was he?"

The woman looked surprised at the direct questioning.

"I beg pardon, but I have a reason for asking. Please tell me all you can."

"I was only eleven. The flood came while we were at supper. Baby and cradle, little Neil, papa and mamma, were engulfed and swept away. I was caught in the crotch of a tree, and rescued. Who was my father? He was a poet and a painter, Andrew Hayes. I am Marjory Hayes."

Mrs. Archer was as sure as if she had had an ancestral record to read that Nancy Wiburn was really Nancy Hayes, that this was Nancy's sister, but she bided her time. While still further pursuing her inquiries, she sent Nancy away to help Janet, for Nancy was a born nurse though not a trained one.

In the manse, things began to brighten. Mr. Ward, as mercurial as ever, and as light of heart under white hair as he had been years and years ago, began to sing about the house, and to see visions

and dream dreams. All his boys came home, for longer or shorter visits, and their presence cheered up their mother. Dr. Huntoon, persistently looking on the bright side, asserted that a few months would restore Mrs. Ward to more than her usual health, in fact, make her young again. A great change was visible in the whole locality. The railway was cut through. Trains invaded the old-time quiet. A bank was built, a public school shot up by magic, a hotel opened its doors to strangers, and David Ward found himself the pastor of a church in the midst of a community. His wife's old prayer was by way of being answered. One of her sons, Hugh, was studying that he might take upon him the solemn vows of his father's calling. Jack was a young doctor. Stuart was a tutor in the university where, as a brilliant student, he had carried off so many honors that envious people were sure he would never amount to anything, in the world of men beyond academic doors.

In New York, Theodore kept up his courage, not through Janet's letters, which were provokingly impersonal and consistently disheartening, but because of his invincible determination never to give up hope till Janet was his own. Nancy who corresponded with him almost as if he had been a brother, encouraged him in this, and, from the hour of her arrival in the mountain land, Mrs. Ward's possession of the devil, if such it was, grew lighter, and she improved in strength. Nancy had an almost mesmeric touch. Her fingers could charm away an ache. Her very tones were potent to calm a perturbed mind. So it came to pass, very naturally, that when the migra-

tion to Dene's Mills took place, Nancy piloted the family there.

Seven years had elapsed since Mr. Ward's missionary work among his Tennessee people had begun. In that time he had taken no vacation; not for a single week, had he been away. That his place should be supplied at no cost to the parish, Horace Evans wrote to Dr. Huntoon, to draw on him for the salary of the substituting pastor, during Mr. Ward's absence. The doctor replied with thanks and a courteous dismissal of the offer.

"We are not so poor as we were, down here; we are indeed growing rich; we can pay for one pastor's supply, and give him a holiday."

Dene's Mills was in its midsummer beauty and glory, when the party of travellers, who had taken their journey by very leisurely stages, reached the up-country station. Mr. Evans was there with carriages. The two old classmates clasped hands, and under the masks of wrinkles and gray hair, caught a glimpse of their boyish selves. Mrs. Ward was as cheerful as if she had known no cloud. When her dark spells were over, their very memory passed away for the time. Elizabeth and Tom were waiting to receive Nancy and Janet, and the latter was hardly amazed when somebody, whom she had not looked for, stepped up with a world of gladness in his eyes. His smile was a sunbeam.

"You cannot escape me, after all," said Theodore.

XVI

SETTLEMENT WORK

“JANET, there is a gentleman in the library asking for your father. He refuses to send up his card, saying that he is an old friend. I happened to be sitting on the veranda when he drove up, so I received him.”

“Where is father?” asked Janet. “I have not seen him the last hour.”

“No, he went to the mill with papa and they are to make a morning of it somewhere. The two dear things are simply renewing their youth. It is fun to watch them. I said that Mr. Ward was out, but the gentleman was inclined to wait, so perhaps you would better see him.” Elizabeth withdrew and Janet went to the library, and there, rising and advancing with hand outstretched, behold, was her ancient enemy, Mr. Leland of Springdale. “Uncle Pumblechook” flitted whimsically across her mind, and she smiled as she responded to his most expansive and fatherly greeting.

“Well, well, well, Janet, you’ve grown, and you’ve filled out. You are a woman. I hadn’t realized it. I was expecting to find the same little Janet I used to know. Now, my dear,” and the gray old deacon beamed benevolently upon her through his spectacles, “I saw it in the *Religious Criterion*, about your father being here, and I’ve come from

Springdale on purpose to get him to pay us a visit, and preach once more in his old pulpit. The young lady says he's not in, but I'll sit still until he comes, all day if necessary. How's your mother?"

"Mother is better, I thank you; but, Mr. Leland, I don't know when father will return, and I don't think he ought to preach, for he's very tired. That's why he's here, that he may rest."

"Tired or not, he'll *want* to preach. I know him, and he won't say no to us. Why, he belongs to us yet, Janet, and I'm not going away till I see him and shake him by the hand. God bless him, I've come all the way on purpose," he repeated, and looked immovable as a rock.

Just then, Mrs. Evans entered, and Mr. Leland was introduced to her, and his errand explained.

"I wouldn't have you miss meeting your old pastor for the world," said the lady of the manor, "and he would feel disappointed, indeed, if he failed to see you. Here is Mrs. Ward, who will confirm what I say."

Janet, with the severity of youth, which often approaches a cynical intolerance, was confounded at the warmth of Mrs. Ward's manner to Mr. Leland; she did not realize that when her mother looked into the old man's eyes, she saw again the glamour of her morning hour, the happy times when her babies were about her, and all the brightness of her early days. Springdale, to Mrs. Ward, had in its very name a sound of melody and a waft of fragrance. At once, she had a strong desire to go back again and meet again the old friends, and sit down for an hour or two in the home. Although incomprehen-

sible to Janet the feeling was by some swift intuition understood by Mrs. Evans, and she touched a bell.

The old butler appeared.

"Send some one on horseback to the mills, and ask Mr. Ward to stop here, before he and Mr. Evans go anywhere else. Make haste," she said. "The matter is important."

Turning to Mr. Leland, Mrs. Evans insisted that he must have some refreshment, and presently a tempting luncheon was brought in, which he ate with appetite while Mrs. Ward chatted with him, her color coming and going like a girl's. She had never lost touch with Springdale, having maintained a correspondence with some of her old friends, and in the years of absence, the disagreeable things had faded from recollection, and the delightful things had been idealized, so that the little hamlet seemed to her now, as if it had been a veritable Arcady. The others melted out of the room and left the two to their pleasant old-time gossip, and Mrs. Ward never noticed their departure. Janet went back to Elizabeth, and directly, Mrs. Evans found them together, the two bright heads bent over their sewing.

"That's what the little mother needs to finish her cure; a visit to Springdale," declared Mrs. Evans with emphasis. "Your father must take her. There he comes now. We'll let him go into the library without telling him who's waiting for him."

Janet looked a little scornful.

"If you knew, dear Mrs. Evans, if you could faintly conceive, the trial that old man always was, the most rasping, irritating, grumbling old creature,

you wouldn't expect father to feel any satisfaction in meeting him again."

But Janet was mistaken. Up the stair, floated a hearty voice, and the house rang with the cheery greeting David Ward gave his former parishioner. Undoubtedly, he was unaffectedly and sincerely pleased to see Mr. Leland, and Janet, amazed and incredulous, heard him say, loudly enough to be audible to all listeners,

"Why, of course, I couldn't go back to my work without seeing all the old friends. Yes, you may count on me, for a week from to-day, and we'll stay as long as Mrs. Ward wishes, and you have room for us."

"I hope I needn't go too." Janet's expression was so eloquent that her companions laughed, and Nancy, who had just returned from a long tramp over the hills, declared, positively, that she would veto her going if it were proposed. Janet was so vehement that Nancy was much impressed.

"Let your father and mother spend the anniversary of their wedding in Springdale; nothing would do Mrs. Ward so much good. I am so thankful that the dear old deacon came, instead of writing a letter. People often say no to a letter when they say yes to a person who comes himself. I tell you, Janet, your mother is in great need of Springdale air. They will both be independent of you when they go. You are keeping too tight a rein on your father and mother."

And independent indeed they were. One sunny morning, the two travellers took the train, and went swiftly down the familiar road to their old home. All Springdale turned out to receive them. There

were changes. Young people, whom Mr. Ward had left in the adolescent period, were now married and settled in their own abodes; the older ones were a trifle stouter, or whiter, or feebler, but everybody was most cordial, and from lip to lip, as people met, the one agitating question in the community was, "Have you seen the Wards? Have you met our dear old minister?" People came from long distances to call. The visit was an event.

The young minister, the third who had been in that parish since David Ward had left it, confided to his wife in the privacy of the breakfast table that the adjective old was misapplied.

"I never saw a younger man, nor one more fascinating. He's like a boy for simplicity and charm, like a man for knowledge and good sense, but old, nonsense, he's just at the meridian!"

"Why, Fred, Mr. Ward must be sixty."

"Oh, possibly, but sixty means juvenility, with a blessed temperament like his."

The young wife was a wee bit jealous for her husband, observing the enthusiasm of the parish for the former pastor, but the husband was a man of David Ward's type, too big for jealousy or envy. Only little men are capable of these spiteful vices.

The Sabbath dawned like the one in the hymn,

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky."

And it having been noised abroad that David Ward would preach, the congregation came from every direction. It was like the tribes going up to Jerusalem. Among the farmers and their wives and chil-

dren, was a scattering of city visitors, who were staying in the country for its quiet and rest. Mr. Leland beamed. Under his shaggy brows, his eyes glowed like lamps. If he had ever been sensible of the torment he had once proved, he had quite forgotten it now, and it was well that Janet was not there, for she would have considered him insufferably patronizing. He almost owned Mr. Ward, and whenever, in the sermon, there was a good point, or when the orator's fire broke the bond of the preacher's ordinary restraint, Mr. Leland scintillated sympathetic approval, nodded his old head with delight, and looked about to catch the pleased glances of the congregation.

"Great preaching, that!" said a man, a man who looked like a personage, going out the low church door. "Who is the minister?"

"David Ward, a former pastor here, now a home missionary in Tennessee."

"I wish we might hear him in Philadelphia," was the reply.

Very strangely, events come to pass in this world. Twenty years ago, David Ward's cup would have been full-brimmed and running over, if he had been invited to preach, as a candidate though indirectly, in a great city church. He was farther on now. He had gone beyond the desire for earthly honor and emolument, and had reached the place where it was, as reverently be it said, it had been his Master's before him, his meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent him. And the years in the mountains had been years of marvellous growth and grand development. He had learned to know God as never before,

and a rare insight had been granted him into the souls of men. David Ward was a magnificent example of what Christ can do with a man who has wholly surrendered himself to be filled with the Divine life.

He was invited to preach in the city pulpit, a few weeks later, and the preaching made a sensation. A child could understand every word, and a philosopher find food in the sermon for a famished soul. Culture, sweetness, freshness, were there, something nurtured in a desert place, apart. What David Ward would once have prized, came to him in fullest measure, and he was grateful, but when men urged him to accept the wider field of usefulness that was now beckoning, he had but one answer,

"I am pledged to the mountain folk, and with them I will stay henceforward." From this position he would not stir an inch.

As for Mrs. Ward, she threw off the last vestige of illness, and looked so much like the girl he had courted years ago, that her husband's rejoicing over her recovered health was pathetic. She lost the wan, faded look, that she had worn so long, and when her Aunts Katherine and Jessamy, whom she went to visit after saying farewell to Springdale, had wrought their will on her wardrobe, she was a very elegant dame, indeed. The two old ladies had wealth, and they chose to do as they thought best with their favorite niece. Though they were proud of Janet, they were not, invariably, satisfied with her. She was too modern to suit their views, and too assured in taking her own course. They were survivors of a different régime. But Janet's mother was entirely to their mind. They dressed her in thick black silks

and shimmering gray satins, and smiled, in a superior way, when she told them that they were fitting her out with a trousseau that would be useless in Tennessee.

After a few weeks spent in travelling, sight-seeing, meeting old clerical friends, browsing in libraries, and looking at pictures, rested in every fibre of his being, David Ward went back to his work. His wife stayed awhile longer with the aunts, and Janet, her parents urging her to do so, went for a time to New York, to be with Nancy. The latter was winning notice and paying her way under distinguished patronage, yet, at no previous time, had her brave spirit so longed for the unattainable joy of kindred. Because of her peculiar sense of isolation, Nancy had held herself aloof from any ties except those of womanly friendship.

"I shall never marry," she said, "knowing that I cannot enter a family with antecedents, because I have none of my own. If I were only somebody's daughter, however humble, I would not care; as it is, I have to fight against morbidness about this, by working beyond my strength."

Mrs. Archer, her generous friend, knew how this preyed upon her, and kept at work, searching for the lost clue to her parentage, but discreetly kept her own counsel. She did find Nancy's sister, and fitted facts to prove the identity in time.

"Are you not going to write any more?" asked an acquaintance of Janet when they met in the colony one evening.

"I cannot write," Janet replied.

Every author except an occasional gifted being who

has risen above rules, and is able to turn out copy with the regularity of a machine, knows the alternations of mood, which are like the ebb and flow of the tide. Days come when the tide is out. The mind refuses to act. The pen lags. If the forcing process goes on, and something is written out of the empty void, it is commonly later rejected as worthless. Janet had exhausted herself in more than one direction. She had thought, studied, felt, and above all worried too much. She had now to wait for the filling of the depleted reservoir.

It was a propitious moment for a new departure. She left Nancy and the colony somewhat abruptly, and impulsively joined herself to settlement work away down-town. The abruptness did not disturb Nancy, who knew Janet's ability to reach a sudden decision, and the impulsiveness rather pleased that lenient critic, Theodore, who was sure that Janet's life would be more wholesome, if less subjective, and more occupied with outside interests and people whom she could help. The settlement would take her outside herself.

The Friendly House was a new enterprise. Hardly five years had slipped away since two or three young women, resting literally on and trusting implicitly in the promises of God, had pitched their tent in a thronged thoroughfare of the East Side. Without money, without furniture, but with a tremendously vital faith in God and in the power of the gospel of Christ, they had begun their campaign. Their original *pied de terre* was a small, five-room flat, tucked away in the heart of a tall tenement, with large families to the right and the left, above and below.

Living there in poverty and privation, they waited on the Lord, and began their work. Young girls and children were invited into their rooms. Presently somebody sent them a few chairs and a little organ. Singing of the most familiar hymns, Bible reading, pleasant talks followed, and soon the young women of the neighborhood found out that there was always a welcome for them if they drifted into the settlement, often a rocking-chair, a cup of coffee and a slice of cake.

By degrees, the five-room flat became too straight a place, and as the means were provided, as constantly and yet as mysteriously, as was the food brought, morning and evening, to Elijah by the ravens, the settlement moved. When Janet sought it, that she might take a part in its work, it was located in a big four-story house, of which every room was occupied. The house fronted on a great open square, and was sunny and clean.

This house had become the virtual centre of the neighborhood. Every home around owned a share in it. Mothers ran in to consult the head worker about their household management, or the resident doctor about their sick children. If a daughter was willful, the mother told this wise friend, and was comforted and counselled. If a piece of good fortune came, the dear friends of the settlement must immediately hear the good news. Of begging, there was little. Self-respecting poverty does not demean itself by begging. Of almsgiving, there was not much. The settlement might have adopted Peter's declaration of old, "Silver and gold, have I none, but such as I have, that I give." It gave lavishly.

Janet found here a sphere for her energies which was most congenial. She taught literature, and the eager girls who came to her evening classes, made rapid progress, though most of them had either stood behind counters or worked at machines or looms, for many hours of the day. Their minds were receptive at every pore; they fairly drank in what Janet had to tell, and she was fain to furbish up what she had learned at Lucas, and to do her best for the students, who asked only a chance for mental discipline. When Janet visited their homes, saw how narrow were their quarters, how bare of comforts, how crowded and ill-ventilated, she was anew impressed with the self-sacrifice of these girls, and with their intense desire for real culture. They were like plants pushing steadily upward to the light. And how dearly they loved those who taught them!

One afternoon, a mother's tea was in progress. Once a week, or once a fortnight, it was the custom to invite the hard-working mothers of the vicinity, to come with their babies in their arms, or clinging to their skirts, not that they might be taught anything practical, sewing, mending, or housekeeping, but just that they might have a good time and enjoy themselves.

Tables were spread with fair white linen, and set with beautiful china. Flowers adorned them. Young girls, from spacious up-town homes, came to pour and dispense tea. Some one played on the piano; there was merry talk, and fun was unchecked. The guests came in their every-day garb, bare-headed, or with shawls over their heads. They came freely. Was not the Friendly House their very own?

Janet, standing by the window, had often seen a tall, sturdy, very aged woman pass the door. Usually, she bore a basket filled with chips and bits of broken plank, gathered from the débris around new buildings, a harvest in which the gleaners are the poor. Her eyes were bright, but her face was a tissue of wrinkles, crisscrossing a fine, hearty, strong old face. Many such are seen among the poor women who sell apples or newspapers, or sit by East Side doors in New York.

As the mother's tea was at its height, one windy afternoon, Janet observed this ancient matron trudging by with her basket. She flew out, and down the steps, meeting her before she had passed.

"Stop, please, gross mutter," she entreated. "Come in, we have company, and we want you. I have been watching for you from my window." She held out her hand persuasively.

"I have no money, mademoiselle, thanks."

"This is a party where money is not asked for."

"I have no clothes. I am not dressed for company."

"This is a company where friends wear whatever they like. We just want you. Please come in, dear lady."

The old guest suffered herself to be entreated. She entered, setting her basket carefully in a corner of the hall. Janet conducted her to a place of honor, a big cushioned, easy chair. A pretty maiden brought her a cup and a plate. Every attention was paid her. As she ate and drank, and listened to the music, she said to Janet,

"It's like Heaven, this, the music, the flowers, the warm room, the rest, all for nothing!"

Then when she saw the shadows gathering outside, she rose to take leave. At the door, she turned and said in a thrilling voice,

"I am eighty years old. I have lived fifty years in New York. This is the first time in fifty years that I have ever tasted bread under any one's roof but my own."

They had tucked a bunch of roses in among her broken wood, and when she took the wood out, there, hidden away beneath it, was a loaf of cake. Her lonely home was decorated that night, as for a fête, with cake on the table, and the roses in a pitcher, and one heart uplifted a new song for an unexpected joy.

Janet wrote to her father, soon after this, "I am learning that the Lord's work is the same everywhere. If one tries to help His little ones, the blessing of the 'Inasmuch' is hers."

"Come and give me a lift, will you not, Janet, in my mission?" said Mr. Fuller. "The Friendly House has more workers than we have, and the work needs you I can't tell you how much."

Janet was restless. The more she did, the more she wanted to do, and though she still declined to consider herself engaged to Mr. Fuller, she was, as her friends noticed with amusement, a good deal under his orders. What he suggested, she often did, and when he said his mission had a vacant place that she could fill, she was not unwilling to go to it. But she kept her room at the settlement, paying her board. Settlement workers are always, practically,

self-supporting, and so put themselves on the level of those among whom they live. And one day, she awakened in her bare cell of a hall room, on the fourth floor, overlooking, far below, a vista of crowded alleys and an acreage of pulley lines, and a rush of new and interesting thoughts filled her brain, she seized her pen, and began to write. Among them, her care for her mother, and her work among East Side friends, and her indecision about her love, had brought Janet the germ of her first book. She sat for hours at a time, scarcely stopping to eat, so absorbed that she did not notice what was going on about her. The head worker was concerned, fearing that such concentration would make Janet ill, but she had learned that best of lessons, to let folk alone, and give them liberty, and so she said no word of remonstrance. But she would send a glass of milk and a biscuit to Janet in the middle of the morning, and there was always a cup of tea for her before she went out in the afternoon, as she always did at five, when Nancy Wiburn took her out for a brisk walk, in all weathers. These were happy times.

XVII

AN EAST SIDE MISSION

JANET said afterwards that her book almost wrote itself. The story came to her full-fledged, and was written with an elan, a vigor that made the days of its progress memorable in her experience. She was enjoying a reaction from the anxiety that had tried her nerves, and there was as well a rebound due to her rest from composition. Her book was sent to a publisher and was so promptly accepted that for weeks she walked on air, and her thoughts were keyed to the lilt of a song. Nothing is so personal as one's book, into which one has woven one's tissue of life. Janet could hardly wait for the happy day when she should hold the first copy in her hand. Sometimes she dreamed of it.

Meanwhile she continued to live at the Friendly House, but she widened the scope of her work, and spent a good deal of time in the Bethany Mission. Among other new departures she taught a Bible class, the girls who were its members coming to her from Italian families whose homes were in that quarter. They were beautiful young girls, with liquid eyes, dark hair, and clear olive skins, and Janet taught them as she would have taught little children the sweet story of the Saviour, and all that He brought to the world. She did a good deal of visiting, too, and found out for herself that there is a great similarity

between rich and poor, that the same chords of sympathy vibrate everywhere if touched by a gentle and loving hand.

One evening Mr. Fuller sent her just at twilight, a note that rather startled her, yet which she felt she could not put aside. "I am laid by," it said, "tonsillitis; that's why you have not seen me since Monday. I had promised to take the prayer-meeting at the mission to-night, but I cannot go out of the house. Please take it for me. Don't refuse."

Janet was familiar with the conduct of women's meetings, but had never taken a conspicuous part in any gathering of men. She had attended at Bethany Chapel, and knew pretty well the character of the assemblages. The colder and rougher the night, the more men, hungry, chilled to the bone, poorly clad, would seek warmth and shelter. A few women would come, but the majority would be men, some young, some of middle age, some very old. They were of the various types one sees in a great city, and a similar effect of battling with misfortune was evident in them all. Men out of work, men wanderers from home, men enslaved to drink, men whom the world had little use for, here they were, and Janet's eyes filled with tears as at eight o'clock she sat on the platform and looked over the room. A great sob caught her throat. In another moment she would be hysterical.

"This won't do," said common sense, and she braced herself resolutely, and prayed inaudibly, but as one does who must take hold on Him that is mighty. Her friend began to sing, and Janet soon found that the men could sing, too. "Saved by grace!" seemed

a favorite and it was one of several that their voices sent ringing to the roof. A young man stepped out from the shadows near the wall. He had brought his violin and to its accompaniment in a rich velvety tenor, he sang:

“ I saw a way-worn traveller
In tattered garments clad :
He struggled up the mountainside
I knew that he was sad.
His back was heavy laden,
His strength was almost gone,
Yet he shouted as he journeyed,
Deliverance shall come ! ”

As the singer ceased, a great chorus gathered into one magnificent sweep of sound, the refrain:

“ Palms of victory, crowns of glory,
Palms of victory, I shall bear ! ”

When the praise service ended, Janet rose, and her stage fright had fled. She began a simple home talk to her audience, bidding them be of good courage, telling them the old tale of Gideon and his little band who attacked the Midianites, giving them as *their* battle cry, “ The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” It was a new pleasure, feeling that her words were helping some of the tempted and tried.

By the door sat a poor fellow, who looked peculiarly dejected. His face was deathly pale, his clothing old-fashioned, his eyes downcast. A little woman by his side, wife or sweetheart, Janet could not tell which, seemed bristling with defiance on his behalf, for those nearest him were not looking at him with much kindness, and even in that crowd of sinners

who had gone far astray there were some who were superior in their own esteem to the man who had been in prison. To the man himself the woman was all gentleness; it was as if her love would interpose a shield between him and the whole hostile world. Her very pose was eloquent of love stronger than death.

Janet went up to the two and held out her hand.

"Oh, where is Mr. Fuller, please?" cried the woman.

"Mr. Fuller is ill, that's why I came; can I do nothing for you?"

"You can't do Mr. Fuller's job, miss," said the woman. "Rob and I were to be married to-night. And I don't know what to do. You see Rob's been away seven years, and I've waited for him, and he's got nobody, nobody in the whole country but me. We were to be married to-night, and to-morrow we were going to the West to start over again among strangers. What shall we do? You know what the song said, Rob, 'Deliverance shall come!' Keep up your heart."

Janet turned to the lady who was waiting for her.

"These friends wish to be married. Will you go with them and me to Theodore? He will surely marry them, or get some one else to do it."

"But he is ill, dear."

"Yes, but he isn't in desperate danger, and he will know how to procure a minister. Have you money enough to go away?" she asked the woman, whose eyes full of hope were fixed on her face.

"Yes, plenty. I've been saving, and Rob has something of his own, haven't you, dear?"

The man spoke then with the accent of one who was educated.

"I'm sorry we are giving so much trouble, but you see, ladies, I've been away so long, shut up behind bars, that I am shy about going anywhere myself. Rachael has been true to me. I've been pretty low down, but I'll be true to her, God helping me."

"God helping you, my friend, you will lead a strong, pure life in the open," said Janet. "Forget the past, and begin over. It isn't too late. God will help you to forgive yourself, since He is willing to forgive you."

The four went through the streets, now storm-beaten, to Mr. Fuller's house. He was up and in his study, not too ill to marry the couple, and with Janet and her friend for witnesses, they were made one. Mr. Fuller's housekeeper was called and the man was fitted out with clothing of comfortable weight and in the style of the day, and a heavy overcoat given him.

"Pass these things on to somebody in want when you are able," said the donor.

"I have no power to thank you, dearest," said Theodore to Janet, when in the wake of the bridal pair, she said good-night.

Various was the work she was called on for in that mission. On her rounds one day, she came upon a woman crying, with her head on the table. It was almost supper time, but there was no sign of supper, and an empty beer can told where the wages that should have paid for a man's evening meal had gone.

"Oh, Molly Byrne, Molly Byrne!" said Janet.

"What did you promise me? Why have you not kept your word?"

The woman lifted a tear stained swollen face.

"I didn't mean to, Miss Janet," she said, "but the drink gets hold of me, and then it's no use. It would be a good day for John, if I'd drown meself in the river."

"Molly, that is nonsense." Janet dealt with her as with a naughty child. "Wash your face and hands and put on a clean apron and tidy up this dreadful room. I'm going out for meat to make a stew, and I'll get John's supper in a jiffy, or at least I'll begin to cook it. Why, Molly, you who have a man who doesn't touch beer should be ashamed to take it yourself."

The home where the man has to dree the weird of a drunken wife is a hundred times worse and more like the pit, than the home to which a drunken husband brings woe and terror. The latter is a home desecrated indeed, but the former is a sanctuary profaned.

Janet was valiantly fighting to rescue this poor weak Molly, and she would not give her up. Again and again Molly slipped back, but the brave, alert, resourceful helper was presently at her side and in the end Molly conquered her evil appetite.

Another phase of Janet's East Side work was her cooking class. To prepare food in an economical and dainty way is a lady's accomplishment. Married in their early youth, having spent their days after leaving school in factory or shop work, the East Side wives and mothers have no knowledge of the commonest household lore. They cannot make bread

nor cook meat, nor brew tea or coffee as it should be, and of the value that lies in broths and soups they are ignorant. Janet did not call her cooking-school a class. In her friendliest manner she would drop in upon a neighbor, and offer to help her with a new recipe that had been sent to her from home. Two or three gossips would come in; Janet's genial air, in which there was no patronage, made her popular. Without apparent intention she raised the housekeeping standard around the mission, until the saloon keepers wondered what subtle influence was undermining their trade.

She told Theodore that one woman was rock of adamant to all her entreaties.

"She slams her door hard, if she sees me coming. She passes me haughtily on the street. She shows me that her house is her castle and that I shall never be permitted to cross her threshold."

"To every citadel there is an entrance, dear," said Theodore. "We must find out hers."

Spring had returned, and near Bethany Mission was a flower-market. Janet, sometimes rising very early, went there for a bouquet to put on the breakfast table at the Friendly, or for blossoms to cheer up her sick people. Buying a basketful one day she saw, standing a little way off and gazing wistfully at the flowers, the woman who always repelled her advances. Obeying an impulse, Janet detached a beautiful red rose from her bunch and as she passed the woman, laid it in her hand, waiting for no thanks.

That afternoon, as she was returning from one of her informal cooking-classes, a little dark-eyed girl pulled her gown.

"Please lady," she said, "mamma would like to speak to you."

Janet turned, and there a few paces off stood at her door, with a very pleasant face, the woman who had kept her at arm's length for weeks. She was one of a group, some of whom were lounging on the steps, some chatting with neighbors, others caring for children who thronged as it seems children do where they are the only wealth. The pedestrian in some quarters must walk with circumspection lest he step on the babies who creep about under foot. A characteristic of the East Side is that the women have endless time to spend in talk, their frowzy looks, disordered dress and neglected homes paying the penalty of their idleness.

"You were good to give me that rose," said the woman, "and I beg your pardon for having been rude to you. The flower took me home again; please forgive me, lady."

"That is all right," said Janet in her sweetest way; she was so happy at this friendly change of attitude that she could have hugged the woman. "Where was home?"

"In Devonshire. My father was a gardener. We had splendid roses over there. If only I could bring my children up among the roses, how different it would be! This hateful New York is killing me, lady."

This was for Janet the beginning of a welcome in the English woman's home, and her reserve passed away. The flower had done what nothing else had been able to do, it had been a messenger of kindness to a discontented soul.

"My little Mary is the only one of my children who was born in England and who remembers anything about our old home," Mrs. Arnold told her later, "and she is too delicate to work, and sits by the window all day, wishing for green fields. I took the rose to her that morning, and she cried for joy."

Mrs. Arnold had a great aversion to missions, and fiercely resented anything like interference or condescension. But when Janet heard all her story, a story of defeat, privation, desperate strife against odds, her husband dead a year after they came to New York, her baby buried in potter's field, she was very compassionate. She wrote to Elizabeth and enlisted her interest, and when the August heats fell intensely on New York streets and the tenements were baked as in a seething oven, Janet had the pleasure of sending Mrs. Arnold and her three children up country to Dene's Mills, where Elizabeth put them in a little vine-embowered cottage, and Elizabeth's mother found employment in the dairy for the English stranger, so that she felt that she was not living on charity. The help that counts must be individual.

The ramifications of a mission are many. Of his people Mr. Fuller asked money that he might carry on outdoor work, send ailing babies to the seashore, provide relief for tired fathers and mothers, and extend a helpful hand to the aged. He took no vacation in the first year of his pastorate, desiring to study more deeply the sociological problems that in summer confront a minister in a great city. They are even more puzzling than the winter ones.

"Is it wise," said a friend, "to give yourself no recreation?"

"I am well and strong, I can take outings when I choose. Next summer it may not be my duty to stay. I believe that a man should rest when he is tired. But I'm not tired, and this summer I'll stay in town."

The young women who were spending the summer in the colony read between the lines that there was a very cogent reason for the young man's decision, and a compensation for any self-denial in the case, because Janet and he were much together. August, however, brought her letters from home, which hurried her away. Mr. Ward wrote urgently that the family needed her, and she packed her trunks and went back to remain indefinitely in Tennessee. Meanwhile there was enough for Mr. Fuller to do in town. So many pastors were absent, that he was called upon for ministries not to the poor alone, but to some of the homeless rich, those who live in hotels and boarding-houses, those who have no church of their own, and who often when sickness or death comes, have no clergyman on whom they may call. He comforted many who were in sorrow, and gave counsel to some who were in perplexity, and the summer passed like a dream away.

And he corresponded with Janet, rather unequally writing three letters to her one.

XVIII

BACK TO THE MANSE

ON the way home, there was an accident to the engine which delayed Janet's train at a little station, several hours. The passengers, assured that they could not get on with their journey, sauntered about the bit of a village, gathered flowers, and otherwise amused themselves. Janet espied a little weather beaten cabin not far from the road, and had the curiosity to go up to it, as it struck her as especially forlorn, neither chickens nor children straying about its tidy dooryard, and this in a part of the country where every cabin and hovel, however humble, has its full complement of both. As she tapped at the door, she heard the regular thud, thud, of an iron, and when somebody said, "Come in," she entered, to see a clothes-horse crowded with fragrant sheets and pillow-slips, while a great basket, packed with dampened pieces, awaited the smoothing iron.

The woman, standing by the table, lifted up a face so strained and desolate, that Janet's heart went out, at once, to her in a burst of pity. What had happened to give that look of utter and comfortless woe, to a woman's eyes?

"May I sit here, and keep you company," she asked, "while the men repair the engine?"

Listlessly, the hostess of the moment assented. Janet watched her as she toiled with feverish haste and unflagging energy, the energy and the haste of desperation.

"You are too tired to work so hard, I'm afraid," she ventured, after a little interval, during which the woman had not noticed her.

"I must work or die," was the answer.

"Well, then," said Janet positively, "let me help you. The train cannot start in two hours. I know how to iron beautifully, and I will be so glad to give you a lift with this big basket full of things. My dear mother taught me how to do everything that needs to be done in a house, and I thank her for it every day of my life. I'm going home to her, now. She's very ill, and needs her daughter."

The woman looked doubtful, but as she watched Janet's deft movements, her scrutiny passed from suspicion to approval. The trim, slender girl, in shirt waist and short skirt, with hat thrown off, and alert, quick manner, was so capable and so swift that the most notable ironer could have found no fault with her performance. After a few moments, the woman said,

"I'm doing this for the hotel; it's a mile back there, out of sight. Lots of city people stay at the hotel in hot weather. My husband has work in the garden and on the farm, and they pay good wages. He brings the clothes back and forth for me. I was the happiest woman in the State till a month ago, when my little girl, my only child, was killed by the train."

Janet stopped ironing. She did not say a word.

She did what was better, she put her arms around the poor woman's neck, and drew her head upon her shoulder.

"Oh, you poor, poor, poor thing!" she whispered. "Yes, dear, cry, that will do you good."

She had seen enough of heart-break to know the anguish of tearless eyes.

The woman did cry. Her tears and sobs relieved her. She had felt that she was growing mad with the agony she was bearing. Janet did not dream it, but she was an angel of God, in that cabin, that summer morning, and she carried His comfort to an aching heart.

"Flossie was going to her grandmother's, up the road. We never let her cross the track alone; her father and I were always careful. She had no need to go that way, for the road winds around above, and is safe, but she took a short cut, and the engine struck her, and she was killed that instant. No, she wasn't crushed, except the back of her head. Her sweet face was not marred. She looked as if she was asleep. They stopped the train, and picked her up and carried her in, my Flossie, that had danced away so light-hearted, a little while before. My God! My God!" cried the woman, throwing up her arms and moaning, "I cannot bear it. I cannot bear it."

Janet said, "No, you cannot bear it. Not all alone. Christ can help you bear it. Let us ask Him."

She knelt right down on the bare floor. As simply as if she saw the Lord, she besought Him to help this suffering one, to show her the meaning of life, to give her submission to His will. "May she know how safe her darling is in heaven. May she realize

that she is alive and waiting for her. May she have great peace."

"Aboard! Aboard!" sharply called the conductor. Janet kissed her new friend, and was gone. As she stepped on the platform to take her place in her own car, she was accosted by a joyful voice.

"Why, surely, surely, here is Janet Ward."

"My dear Miss Prescott!" Janet's face a moment ago tear-wet, broke into a radiant smile, little short of rapture.

"Yes, I have been on the train since early morning. I leave it in two hours. I wish we had met sooner. We might have had this long wait together."

"It would have been lovely, but I'm glad it was not in our power to see through opaque walls," said Janet. "I might not have seen poor Flossie's mother, if I had had the pleasure of meeting you." And she told the little incident that had given her a chance to be a sister of consolation.

"God gives us these unexpected opportunities, sometimes. They are part of His plan."

Miss Prescott and Janet had many threads to take up, in their happy meeting, for though they had occasionally corresponded, there were long intervals of silence between the letters, as must be the case with busy people. They were glad to arrange for some future meetings, and Janet felt rested as she looked into the strong, serene face of her friend. Suddenly she realized that she was very, very tired.

"I have been carrying loads and working hard, Miss Prescott. And life is sometimes anxious and very hard to bear."

"Yes, dear," said her friend, "of course it is often so. Yet should it be? The dear Lord never means one of His children to carry an anxious heart. He says expressly, 'Take no thought for the morrow, the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' And over and over again, in His word, in one form or another, He bids us cast our care upon Him. So why carry what our Lord will carry for us?"

"It isn't about myself, Miss Prescott; it's about my dear mother that I am disturbed. For the last two years it's just been like a pendulum, swinging now this way and now that, our solicitude for her, and we are afraid that she'll never stay well, though a few months ago we were assured that she would overcome every difficulty."

"Dear," said Miss Prescott, "I fancy that you may have a period before you when you will need all the calmness, composure, and courage, that God can give you. Would it not be well to ask God to supply you abundantly, for the trial, whatever it may be? Your mother is God's child, too; if you can trust her to God, no evil can befall her. If she is to be an invalid, you must accept that, and brighten up her days; you cannot let her see a sorrowful countenance in her room. There is wonderful wisdom in living an hour at a time, filling the hour with trust. But there, I did not mean to preach a sermon."

"You haven't, but you've helped me. You will come to the manse, if you can, before you go home, will you not?"

Miss Prescott promised. They separated, as the dusk fell over the landscape, and through the evening darkness, the train rushed away to the wayside

station where Janet stepped out, to be greeted by her father and two tall brothers. Through the dewy lanes, flower-scented, through the road overarched by great trees, and up the hillside, the old pony trotted, and Janet, leaning back in the comfortable surrey, felt as if she had never been away.

At the manse door, her mother met her, a slender, almost girlish, figure, dressed in white. Janet was startled at her mother's beauty. It was as if the years had slipped from her like a sheath, and the delicate bloom of her twenties had returned. Mrs. Ward was ethereal in her grace and lack of color. She had lost the faint pink that had lingered in her cheeks, and her skin was of the texture and tint of a white rose. Even her joy, at having her daughter beside her again, was not enough to bring a touch of red to change her pallor. Though so fragile, she made no allusion to pain or weakness, and was so gay and blithe-hearted, that first night, that Janet was charmed and deceived. But the next morning the mother did not rise for breakfast, and as the one thing on which she had always insisted was that unless absolutely ill she must herself pour the morning coffee, Janet saw that the brave spirit was not able to fight against the ailing body.

The manse habit was to have prayers before breakfast. Janet rose early, came down and supervised the little handmaid, who was the helper for the time; then went into the little square room, which was parlor and study combined, her father having moved his books there that he might always be close to his wife when she needed him. Her room was a chamber across the hall, and the hall of good size, sunny and

cheerful, was the place where the boys kept the guns and fishing tackle, and where much of the every-day life of the manse went on.

“Doesn’t mother come to breakfast?” asked Janet.

“Not now, daughter. Mother stays in her room till eleven o’clock. Dr. Huntoon likes her to save her strength. Run in and say good-morning to her, and we’ll have prayers, if she’s able, in her room.”

Janet never forgot the hymn they sang that morning. Her brother Stuart went to the piano, and the tune was “Martyrs.”

“From all Thy saints in warfare,
For all Thy saints at rest,
To Thee, O blessed Jesus,
All praises be addressed.
Thou, Lord, didst win the battle
That they might conquerors be;
Their crowns of living glory
Are lit with rays from Thee.

“Apostles, prophets, martyrs,
And all the sacred throng,
Who wear the spotless raiment,
Who raise the ceaseless song;
For these, passed on before us,
Saviour, we Thee adore;
And walking in their footsteps,
Would serve Thee more and more.

“Then praise we God, the Father,
And praise we God, the Son,
And God, the Holy Spirit,
Eternal Three in One.
Till all the ransomed number
Fall down before the throne,
And honor, power, and glory,
Ascribe to God alone.”

Her father took the Book, and read a chapter from Ezekiel. His very tones were as an uplifting force to Janet's heart, somehow, as he read,

"For thus saith the Lord God, 'Behold I Myself, even I, will search for My sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out My sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out of the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land, and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the water courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie down in a good fold, and on a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I Myself will feed My sheep and will cause them to lie down,' saith the Lord God. 'I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.'"

Blessings on the Old Testament. They, who pass over the wonderful words of our Lord in the prophecies and in the psalms, lose much of strong consolation. Mr. Ward, in the family, always read in a low voice, but with peculiar lingering over the passages he loved. He sat beside the bed, and as he read, one hand held his wife's. Janet saw the contrast, hers, thin, almost transparent, clinging to the husband's hand, that was firm, and brown, and strong. "How they love one another," she thought. "How they

love one another. How will they ever endure to be separated?"

Kneeling, Mr. Ward commended the household to God for the new day, in a prayer so intimate in phrase and feeling that Janet felt as if the Mercy Seat were indeed there in her father's sight.

She marvelled, as she went about that first day, at the ease of the household comradeship. Confronting the fact, as it lifted its head like a barrier across her path, that change and loss were coming to them soon, it was impossible for her to be natural. She was under a strange constraint. But her father told merry stories, and the boys went in and out, laughing, whistling, chatting, just as they always had. People came to the manse, too, as they always had; a continual procession of visitors, who had to see the minister, on one or another errand. Her youngest brother, little Ben, who had shot up into a great lad, was strumming on his banjo, or conning his Latin lesson, and a half dozen boys stopped in, during the day, to ask Mr. Ward's help over some hard place in their studies. Dr. Huntoon casually called, at least he seemed to happen in as if by accident, and after he had talked to Mr. Ward in the study, with an effect of merely stopping a moment for politeness, he looked in at Mrs. Ward's room, pronounced her better, and went cheerfully off, complimenting Janet on her authorship, and declaring that she was prettier than ever, almost as pretty as her mother, but not quite. "No, not quite," he repeated.

Mrs. Ward was at the noonday dinner; in the manse they adopted country ways, and lived as their neighbors did. After dinner, her husband took her

and Janet for a drive, and they stopped now and then at some friendly house, and while Mr. Ward went in for a brief pastoral inquiry, hardly a visit, Janet and her mother talked. The mother had taken on something of her husband's old eagerness; she was animated as Janet had never known her to be. There was a strain of expectancy about her, and her eyes were like stars, in her white face.

Late that evening, when the boys had gone to keep some appointment, and Mrs. Ward had retired, and was asleep, Janet rushed to her father, and threw herself in his arms.

"Oh, dad, dad!" she exclaimed, "what does it all mean? Are we to lose mother? Why do you trust Dr. Huntoon? Has everything been done?"

He gathered her in his lap and held her as if she had been a little child, smoothing her hair with tender touches. An infinite patience had overlaid the old vehemence of David Ward.

"Everything has been done that can be done, daughter," he said. "We hope to keep our dear one a good while. The end is in God's hands. His will, not ours, must be done."

"Father, dear," said Janet, "I sometimes hate God's will. It seems so cruel and unjust."

"Do not say that, Janet. Do not feel it. If you feel it, remember that the feeling is a temptation of the devil. God's will is my only comfort now, the pillow on which I rest my head, the balm which soothes my heart. God is never cruel, nor unjust. If it is best for us to drink this bitter cup, He will infuse it with sweetness. You are overwrought and very tired. Everything will look brighter to you

when you are rested, and when you can accept God's will."

Days came and went. They slipped away, Janet thought, like beads from a broken string. At the moment the days were hard to bear, but to the end of her life they will be beautiful, in Janet's remembrance.

One morning she heard, very early, the tinkle of her mother's little silver bell. Her father had a bed in the hall, and Janet slept in a room at the head of the stairs, with her door open. If the mother wished anything she touched the bell. Janet heard her say, as Mr. Ward stirred to go to her,

"Not you, this time, dear. Sleep on, I want Janet."

The minister had ridden forty miles the day before. He was fatigued, and in a moment sleep held him fast again. But Janet was fresh and bright, after a good night's rest.

"I want to tell you, dear," said the mother, "that I have had a wonderful experience. The Lord has so revealed Himself to me this night that I can hardly wait to go home. All along, I have had a withdrawing from Him. I have not wanted to leave this world. I have not been able to see how David could do without me. And my boys, and you. But now, I can leave you all to the Lord."

"Oh, my precious little mother, whatever you do, don't talk so. Please don't. Make an effort to get well. We just can't spare you. I shall pray, and pray, and pray, that God will let you stay with us. What would this manse be with you gone out of it?"

All this in earnest, pleading accents, poured out

in passionate haste. Mrs. Ward smiled. She had passed into a realm too tranquil for love, itself, to disturb her.

"Pray, Janet," she said, "that the Lord's will may be done. I can't tell you how I know it, darling, but I do know that, before long, He will send His messenger for me, and I want you to be very sure that that very day will be, to me, as happy and as welcome as the day that I married my husband, as the day that I first kissed your little face, when you were my baby. Janet, I can't explain it, but heaven has come so near me that I see with clear eyes. It's only a little while for any of us, and I want you to be glad with me. We must not have a single sad moment in this house, because Jesus wants me to go home first." And this attitude she maintained.

XIX

HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER

SUMMER drifted into autumn, the trees put on their gorgeous colors, and the forests were beautiful in the opaline haze of morning and golden glory of evening. Janet kept her mother out of doors as much of the time as she could. With cushions piled in the hammock or pillows in the easy chair and a hassock for her feet, Mrs. Ward spent long hours dreaming or drowsing when she was too weary to talk or read. Her husband or daughter took her for drives, as she was able to bear them, and sometimes she seemed for a little while so much stronger that their hopes revived. But these flickers of the vital flame meant little, and were usually succeeded by low spells when she was so faint and spent that they feared to see her fade away before their eyes. Life was just then not easy.

One day when Janet was battling very hard for cheerfulness, so hard to maintain when little by little but very surely indeed she discerned the advance of that angel whose presence on an earthly threshold means grief and tears, she heard a footstep behind her, and a hand with a grasp she knew, clasped hers in a strong pressure.

"Why, Theodore!" she exclaimed. The joy that lit her face at the surprise of his coming was an involuntary witness of her feeling towards him. That

joy ran up its flag of pleasure in a flush upon her cheeks, and a dancing light in her eyes.

"Yes, dear," he said. "You must pardon my unceremonious visit, but I arranged to come so unexpectedly that there was no time for a letter, and I would not telegraph. I came that I might see your father and your mother, as well as yourself, Janet. I have important business with both."

Janet led the way into the manse. When she saw how pleased her mother was at the visitor's entrance, she was self-reproached. Purposely she had scarcely mentioned his name, and his letters which came to her regularly had been irregularly and briefly answered. It dawned upon her that Theodore was a very steadfast and patient lover, and as he sat talking with her mother, so gentle, so tender, so thoughtful, and she watched his face, she saw in it new lines of resolve, of strength.

"I will never surrender my own," was what she read in that countenance, and its quiet steadfastness needed no interpretation beyond itself.

When she left the room for awhile to see about her household tasks, Theodore said a word to Mrs. Ward of his love for Janet. She put out her shadowy hand, so thin, so hot, and laid it on his cool palm.

"I am happy to give her to you," she said. "But when I am gone, she must stay awhile with her father, for he will need her. This will be a desolate house for him, and he cannot endure it in solitude."

"Dear Mrs. Ward, I will not hurry her, nor shall Mr. Ward be left alone if I can help it; I can wait if necessary and serve, as long as Jacob waited and served for Rachel."

"You will not need to wait so long," she answered with a wan smile. "But Theodore, tell me, has Janet said yes to you? It seems strange that she would do that and not confide in her father and mother."

Then Theodore told her of his courtship, and of Janet's acceptance and refusal, and her mother listened with comprehension. She knew Janet. "You must carry her by storm," she said. "Do not let her think for a moment that you will be satisfied with a no. Dear child, she has had nothing, nothing, to do with my illness. One cannot live forever!"

Then, David Ward came riding up, and was as hearty in his welcome as Theodore could wish. The restrained pain in his face was evident, but it was bravely held in check, for he would not grieve the dear one who was just now uppermost in his every thought. He brought her a bunch of cardinal flowers, and told her where they grew, he rearranged her cushions, and when she was tired, he lifted her in his strong arms and carried her as if she had been a child to her bed. In truth she was now a very light weight.

The boys were all at home. Nobody ventured very far away. There was an unspoken but imperious necessity for them to keep together for the time. Though the boys were not pressing on fast with their studies, they were not idle. The cutting of the railway through their district had brought commerce nearer, and there was work enough and to spare for all who were not idly inclined. None of Mr. Ward's children were lazy or slothful. The paternal energy and force repeated itself in each of the family.

And the mother's prayers made in faith many years ago were to be answered in days to come, for two of her sons, Ralph and Dave had dedicated themselves, one to the work of the student volunteers, another to home missions.

"I shall know all about you both," she said to them. "Though you cannot see me, I am persuaded that I shall see you, and I hope if any one is going to heaven after I get there, you will be sure to send me a message."

In all the years that followed, Janet and her brothers remembered this request. Again and again, when some dear saint was passing hence, they said,

"When you meet mother, tell her this, tell her that." And why not? Though on our side, the veil is too thick for our dim eyes to pierce it, though we hear no sound with our deaf ears, so filled with the noises of earth, why should not they, who are freed from the limitations of the flesh, have vision and hearing which we have not? As one said in the hush of a great sorrow and the loneliness of a great parting, "She is in heaven and Christ leads her by the hand, and I am on earth, and Christ leads me by the hand, so there's only Christ between us."

Christ the pitiful, Christ the consoler, Christ the nearest and dearest friend. If there were anything the one at home with Him could want it would be surely granted, and what could give more bliss than some service for the loved ones left below?

Mrs. Ward's interest in every one about her did not abate, and it extended to all her daughter's friends. To Barbara, Nancy, Elizabeth, and Miss Prescott, she sent messages, delighting in their letters, and on their

part, there were few days when letters or flowers or some sweet token of love did not reach her from them. When Nancy had her great news to tell, the news that she had found a sister, it was to Mrs. Ward she wrote, pouring out her whole heart in a letter that was like a song of triumph. When Barbara's baby came, the good news was sent at once to Mrs. Ward. Elizabeth never let a day pass without sending her a message, and Miss Prescott took a whole week out of her busy life that she might spend a half day with Janet's mother.

Mr. Fuller lingered on for several weeks. He was now taking the vacation that he found he needed, and, as he had old friends and kindred not far away, he could see Janet daily. His errand to Mr. Ward, he did not then reveal to Janet, but besides formally asking her father's permission to marry Janet, he told him of the persuasion of many friends that the time had arrived when Mr. Ward could serve the cause of home missions better in New York, than at his mountain post.

"The whole field needs you, not a portion," he said, "and there is a secretaryship waiting for you to fill."

Mr. Ward put the matter aside, and Theodore almost felt that his mention of it was premature, yet he had promised to convey the desire of some who had the Lord's cause much at heart.

When the end came, it was so softly and quietly that the mother slipped away, that those around her scarcely knew that she had gone. Amid the first awed silence, a maid, whose singing had been a solace to Mrs. Ward, began in low, tender tones,

"God be with you till we meet again," and the family, heart-broken as they were, joined in the chorus,

"Till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet."

They laid their precious one to rest in the little cemetery in the mountains, under a great oak. It was a peaceful bed in which to await the resurrection of the just. Before they left the grave, a choir of young people who had sung "Beyond the smiling and the weeping," and "Nearer my God to Thee" during the services in the little church sang a hymn that Mrs. Ward had loved.

"The Homeland ! O the Homeland !

The land of souls free-born !

No gloomy night is known there,

But aye the fadeless morn :

I'm sighing for that Country,

My heart is aching here ;

There is no pain in the Homeland

To which I'm drawing near.

"My Lord is in the Homeland,

With angels bright and fair ;

No sinful thing nor evil,

Can ever enter there ;

The music of the ransomed

Is ringing in my ears,

And when I think of the Homeland,

My eyes are wet with tears.

"For loved ones in the Homeland

Are waiting me to come

Where neither death nor sorrow

Invade their holy home :

O dear, dear native Country !

O rest and peace above !

Christ bring us all to the Homeland

Of His eternal love."

The very loveliest word that was said about her was said by a little child who saw her as she lay covered by white roses, before the casket was closed.

"I shall never be afraid to die. I have seen Mrs. Ward. It is only falling fast asleep."

The winter settled down, long, cold and silent. Three of the boys went away. Janet, her father and two of the lads were at home. Strangely desolate, the manse was yet not doleful, for the light of God was in it. Mr. Ward was as ever busy, busier than ever indeed, for he had decided that the time had come when it would be right for him to leave his charge for other work, and he visited every home, talked with every inquirer, wrought with every impenitent man for miles, while when the communion seasons came, he gathered many into the church. Janet seconded his efforts. She assembled the mothers and daughters as her mother used to in pleasant social meetings. She taught the children in their Junior Endeavor and Mission Bands, and from time to time she wrote, working hard on a second book. Her first was bringing her wide recognition and some money, and the girls at the colony were proud that she had been one of them when it was sent forth to the publishers.

"My little Janet is bidding fair to be a distinguished woman," said her father, patting her head as if she had been a child still. "I wish your mother could have read this criticism."

"Mother knows," said Janet with a smile. "I am just as certain mother knows all that it is sweet for her to know, as that you and I are here together, dearest daddy."

They began, towards the spring, to make ready for their flitting North. There were books to pack in many little boxes. Books are so heavy that when they are transported they cannot go in large and bulky packages. The china, which Mrs. Ward had always so greatly prized, some of it an inheritance from *her* mother and her grandmother, was sacred in Janet's eyes. No piece had ever been nicked, cracked or broken, and no hired hands had ever touched it. The ladies of the family through generations had taken care of these egg-shell cups and saucers, had themselves washed it when in use, and cared for it with dainty and delicate handling. Janet herself packed it, and it was the task of days.

Spring returned. As the wrens again built in the eaves, and the grass grew green, the Wards set their faces northward. Dr. Huntoon, old man as he was, wept when he said good-bye to his friend. The countryside was stirred with grief. The silent, reserved mountaineers wrung Mr. Ward's hand, and the women clung to Janet and kissed her. The one comfort they had was that Mr. Ward's son would soon come to them, to carry on his father's work.

In the last of April, father and daughter were in New York established in a little home.

XX

FAME NOT ENOUGH

THE youthful writer fondly fancies that fame will complete his or her every unsatisfied wish. When Janet went to commencement at Lucas College the summer after her second book was published, and the President asked her to receive at her side, while everybody treated her as though her success had conferred honor upon her Alma Mater, when undergraduates treated her with flattering respect and the alumnæ rose at their annual breakfast in token of their pride in the work of one of their number, Janet tasted the sweets of fame. But she was not puffed up. Her father thought he had never seen her more humble, and she explained it to him in a nutshell.

"I am so far from reaching my ideal, dad, and I am so conscious of my shortcomings that I am simply ashamed. But the dear people are very, very kind."

They went on a round of visits that year before Mr. Ward began his work at the Board rooms, a work which would necessitate long and frequent absences from home, and a great deal of correspondence. Wherever they went, father and daughter attracted notice from those they met, and as always Mr. Ward's soldierly figure, keen, clear cut face and magnetic manner drew the crowd to him. Janet had grown beautiful with the years. Her first girlish

slimness had rounded out to fuller curves. She carried herself finely. There was about her the unmistakable air of breeding, the manner of a gentle woman which sets people at their ease, and makes them appear at their best. Mr. Ward saw in her much of her mother's charm, and his devotion to her was so marked that more than one plain-spoken old auntie warned him against idolatry. The old aunties were fond of staying with Janet in the new home she had made for her father in New York, and she put herself out to be nice to them, taking them to concerts and luncheons and lectures, and seeing that they were never left out of any pleasure which they could enjoy. When her father had borne with commendable resignation a number of warnings from Aunt Jessamy on the theme of his pride in Janet, he suddenly turned on her one day.

"I am not sure that you and Aunt Katherine are not worse than I in spoiling and petting our lassié, but, dear ladies, I want you to know that I don't believe love ever spoils anybody. So far as I read my Bible, we are told to love one another, for love is of God. Love is sunshine, love is the south wind, love is blessedness. I'll tell you, Aunt Jessamy, what it is that ruins people's dispositions and wounds and hurts them; it is hate and malice and envy and uncharitableness. When there is bickering in a home, when a young woman is misunderstood, and found fault with, when she is unduly prevented from living out her life as she feels she ought, then she is spoiled. A hundred boys and girls are ruined by scolding and crossness, for one who is injured by too much loving." God help those who are not loved."

"Well, David," said the old lady smiling at him tolerantly, "you always did have your own opinions, and your whole brood are turning out well. Now, just for curiosity, tell me, were you just as indulgent when your children were little? Did you ever punish the boys?"

"There was never a rod in the manse, Aunt Jes-samy, if that is what you mean. I thank God that, impulsive as I am, I was never so left to myself as to correct a child in anger, and no child of mine was ever struck. I was unjustly beaten myself by a harsh schoolmaster, once, and the resentment I felt was so bitter, that boy as I was, I could have killed the man. I decided that no child of mine should be whipped in school or at home, and my dear wife agreed with me. But I would not like to say that the children were never disciplined in other ways."

Janet had entered the room and had heard a part of this conversation.

"Daddy," she said, "you punished me once when I was a little thing, and it hurt as much as a whipping, and made a longer impression."

"You must be mistaken, my dear. Stuart, or Hugh, or Ralph, perhaps might say that, but not you. As I remember it, you were always the best of children."

"Nevertheless, I had my naughty fits, and went into tantrums. I can remember them now. I was determined not to speak to an old lady in the church at Springdale. For some reason I had conceived a violent aversion to her; her bonnet and veil I can see yet, and I shouldn't now like anybody with that sort of bonnet. One day she came to the manse, and

against my will, she kissed me. I stamped my foot and called her names, and wet my handkerchief to rub off the place she had kissed. Mother sent me out of the room, excused me as best she could to the old dame who was naturally very much offended, and then came up-stairs to talk to me. As I was determined not to be good, mother began to undress me to put me to bed, which was her usual method of punishment. I screamed and fought, and finally slapped my mother, and in the very midst of the battle, you walked in."

"Well, in my day," said Aunt Jessamy, "you would have been whipped as well as sent to bed. I think a whipping would have done you good. Though I don't think you were originally without provocation."

"I recall nothing of this scene," said Mr. Ward. "Janet must be mistaken."

"Indeed I am not. You looked very stern and very sorrowful. You bade dear mother sit down and you undressed me and put me in bed, where I stayed the rest of the day. And you said, 'Janet, for one week, I shall not kiss you for good-night or good-morning.' You did not, and I was broken-hearted. By the time you restored me to the place where you would kiss me, I was ready to behave well to the whole congregation."

"I had no idea I had ever been so severe. Parents forget as they grow older, what they did and felt when they were young. And the elder children come in for the severest discipline."

"Well, daddy dear, you were right and just, and I've always thought so. Had a vehement, headstrong

child such as I was, have gone on always unchecked, there would have been no living with her. However you and mother managed it, we manse children learned self-government and we acquired it early. I, for one, have never regretted it."

"The aunties think I spoil you now."

"So you do, dear daddy, and so does everybody. It is a great responsibility to have the whole of one's world so very kind to one."

Janet was much in demand at present. She and Nancy divided between them, the pleasures of guests of honor at clubs and receptions, and both had more invitations than they could accept. Nancy's water-colors were praised as highly as Janet's books, and both had every hour full. But Janet found time to go often to the settlement, where she kept the girls very lovingly in touch with her, teaching their classes in literature and leading their meetings. She was beginning to look very pale and worn with her constant engagements, and was for the first time in her life, unreasonable and cross, so that her father was puzzled and disturbed, and the aunties, concluding that she had too much to do and required rest, be-took themselves to a visit in another direction.

She was reading proof one morning when Theodore Fuller walked in, and took the work into his own hands. He gently lifted the printed sheets from her desk, and carried them to a distant window.

"I'll finish this task," he said. Then with very autocratic decision, but still gently he led Janet across the room and seated her in a big easy chair, with her back to the light.

"Now, my little lady," he said, "sit very still in-

deed, where I have put you, until I tell you that you may stir. I am as good a proof-reader as you are."

In a few minutes he returned, announced the work done, and took a seat beside her.

"Janet," he said gravely, "when is this probation of mine to end? When will you marry me? I want you to name the day."

"Not this minute."

"This very minute."

"But why such haste?"

"We have not been in haste. I have waited with most exemplary fortitude, but I can wait no longer. Your father will be at home on Saturday. Shall we be married on Monday?"

Janet sat up in her chair and laughed merrily.

"You foolish boy. I have nothing ready."

"Clothes do not matter. You always look as you ought. Janet, shall we be married on Monday?"

"No, my dear, Monday is not a good day."

"Tuesday?"

"No, not Tuesday."

"Well, name your own day then. For, I warn you, Janet, I have arrived at the end of my tether. You and I have been plighted lovers quite long enough. Now I need my wife. She must put me off no longer."

Eventually they settled upon Wednesday, a month distant, and Janet's birthday. Whereupon Janet telegraphed in imperative haste to the aunties to come back, for she needed their aid about her trousseau, and sending for Nancy told her that she might get ready for the wedding.

"You will be my bridesmaid, of course."

Then ensued a talk about the wedding, what the

bride should wear, and whether it should be at home or in church. These details are of fresh interest to every bride. Nancy pleaded for a church wedding, but Janet rather inclined to one at home.

"What does Theodore wish?" asked Nancy.

"Oh, we have not discussed that point. Naturally he will leave every arrangement to me. I think that only fair."

Nancy went home and wrote a letter.

The next day but one, the letter was answered, not to her, but to Janet. And this was what Elizabeth Evans had to say. Elizabeth had been for some time Tom Evans' wife.

"My dearest Janet,—Tom and I have been talking things over, since Nancy's letter came. Of course you are writing to me yourself but I'll not wait for you. Your wedding must be from Dene's Mills, the place where you and Nancy and I began our friendship, and *the* place for your new life to begin. Father and mother feel about it just as I do. Here is the big house with plenty of room. Here is the little church that will make so beautiful a setting for the bridal party. Here are Tom and I to entertain you. Father too wants Mr. Ward to hobnob with him for a few days and get used to the thought of you as a married lady. You can come here with your father, the week before the wedding day, you two and the aunties; and Mr. Fuller may arrive on the wedding morning with his best man. The last details may wait till you are here, but Janet, only say yes to my plan, and I'll engage that all the people you want and cannot do without shall be here to see you married." There was much sweet urgency.

Elizabeth's proposal was accepted. It was at Dene's Mills that Janet and Theodore were married. The bride was in white, she wore a point lace veil that her grandmother and her mother before her had worn. Her father performed the ceremony, and she went away with her husband to spend the honeymoon in Tennessee.

The evening before the wedding Janet spent in the room which had always been hers when she visited Elizabeth. No alterations had been made in it since first a little wayfaring girl, just leaving home, she had been its occupant. She thought of the many pleasant things, of the few sorrowful experiences she had seen and known since she had knelt beside that bed on the evening, when she had slept away almost for the first time, from her father's house. Streaming over the floor, the white light of the moon fell upon the very spot where then she had said her prayers. She knelt to say them again. It seemed to her that she was not alone. Into her heart there crept a warm sweet sense of companionship, "I thank Thee, oh, my Saviour," she whispered, "that my mother is with Thee, and that she is with me too."

XXI

THEODORE AND I

“**N**EVER were two people so all in all to each other,” said Belle Nelson some time later, as, sitting in the middle of a group at the girl colony, she talked to them about Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, to whom she had been paying a visit. Mrs. Nelson was en route to her home and her children after her trip abroad. She was in splendid health, and very happy. Her widow’s dress was laid aside, and she was ready to undertake whatever offered itself to her hand. Stopping over a little while, she had seen several of her friends, and had dined with Janet.

“Everything is ‘Theodore and I’ with Janet,” she said, “and it is edifying to notice how she defers to him, while it is beautiful to watch his adoration of her. There is in the wide world nothing so eternally fit and proper as the coronation of a girl’s career, in a happy marriage. I am sure Janet will proceed to do her best work from this time on.”

Belle had not been happily married, but her unfortunate experience had not embittered her. She was as sweet of nature, as sanguine, and as cheery for others as if she herself had known no baptism of fire. It had purified not wasted her.

“I challenge your opinion,” said one of the ladies, “that Janet will do her best work hereafter. She

will, I fancy, lose much of her individuality, become a mere shadow of that husband of hers, and devote herself to the parish work and to domesticity. That may be a gain and not a loss to her as an individual, but *we* need not expect any more books from her pen, nor any more contributions of herself to benevolence. Theodore will, after the manner of men, absorb her entirely. I wish I could see it differently."

"I can see, Miss Ogden," replied Belle, "that you belong to that wing of the sex which is indifferent to marriage. In your particular case I assume that the right man has not loomed up on the horizon. Janet is not the sort of woman to lose her individuality in marriage, but I think she will gain a new charm and new power from her close friendship with a strong, broad-minded, many-sided man."

"Close friendship, what can you mean?"

"Can there be any friendship so intimate as that of marriage? The two who have given themselves to one another are comrades on the road. Each has something to give that the other needs. Each supplements the other wherever there is a lack. Under Theodore's inspiration, I am ready to believe that Janet will write a far better book than she has yet given us, and I am sure that his sermons will hereafter be a great deal more to the point, more incisive, and more sympathetic, because his wife will be his critic and will stimulate him to do his best."

"Time will tell," said Miss Ogden, doubtfully.

"Time will tell," repeated Mrs. Nelson, confidently.

Time did tell. As the Fullers went on their way, the daughter of the manse proved herself a model minister's wife. She was beloved by her husband's

people and to her was due a large share of the influence and the success to which he attained. She conciliated those who were sensitive because they felt overlooked, she was the leader of the women, she made her home a resort for the young people, she opened its hospitable doors to those who were boarding, or were away from homes of their own. Judicially and theoretically speaking a church has no valid claim on the wife of its pastor, yet in the rivalries and competitions which do unfortunately invade the field of the church, the wife is the pastor's aide-de-camp, and has much to do in making or marring his position. An unpopular wife may neutralize her husband's efforts, and leave his parish like a desert instead of a garden. A man of moderate equipment, intellectually and socially of a reserved and timid habit, which handicaps him so that neither as preacher nor as pastor does he shine, may surpass his contemporaries in the race, simply because of the favor which his amiable or talented wife receives wherever they go.

Janet and Theodore were well mated. They liked the same things, they assisted one another, they walked hand in hand. Though two or three years passed in which Janet wrote no book, that was not because of Theodore, but was wholly due to the twins. Janet's son and daughter came together, and for a good while in their little lives, they absorbed all their mother's time and thought, and were more worth while in her opinion than any other enterprise which could stimulate her ambition.

They were three years old, when one day, out of a clear sky, came a thunderbolt of sorrow that was

almost more than Janet could bear. Mr. Ward had been evidently growing in the depth of his piety, he was more spiritual, more Christlike, more lovable than ever. None of his wonderful youthfulness of nature was gone; he was like a child still, impetuous, and impulsive, and yet in daily duty strenuous and indefatigable. His health was unbroken, and with the years and whitened hair he grew only more distinguished. One did not think of age when David Ward stood in the pulpit; one thought only of a lion-like man who had the heart of a lamb. He travelled long distances, and told what he had seen in words so compelling in their force, that men were eager to give money that the good work might be carried on.

Mr. Ward found Janet's home so much his own that he was often there. The children were his delight. They idolized their grandfather. Janet sometimes planned a surprise for him, as when one autumn she invited her brothers to come to her and stay over a Thanksgiving that they and their father might be together. Every incident of the visit was charming. The whole family were as happy as they had ever been together. Janet had more than once while the joyous day passed that immanent sense of her mother's nearness which completed and ensphered the day.

Evening came, and they had family worship after which the boys said good-night and went their several ways. Mr. Ward sat with Theodore and Janet, the Bible in his hand. Presently he opened it again and as if musingly, read here and there a verse from Paul's Second Letter to Timothy.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

"The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

"I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only but also to all them that love His appearing."

He closed the book, went to the open piano, and as he often did, struck a chord or two and began to sing one familiar hymn after another, while Janet and Theodore in the firelight sat with clasped hands. Finally he ended with,

"Sing of Jesus, sing forever
Of the love that changes never,
Who or what from Him can sever
Those He makes His own ?

"With His blood the Lord has bought them,
When they knew Him not, He sought them,
And from all their wanderings brought them
His the praise alone.

"Through the desert Jesus leads them,
With the bread of heaven He feeds them,
And through all the way He speeds them,
To their home above."

He left the piano and came to the two who were listening.

"Janet," he said abruptly, "when next you see Nancy, tell her how very glad I am that she has kept this Thanksgiving day in her sister's house. All that story of her discovering her kith and kin is most interesting. 'Through the desert Jesus leads them.' She will always be our dear Nancy Wiburn, yet it is a joy that she knows herself not base-born but the daughter of reputable folk, with some one of her blood in the world. Yes, it is true, everlastingly true, 'Through the desert Jesus leads them, with the bread of heaven He feeds them.' Be sure you give Nancy my love. She has been another daughter to me."

"But dear father, you'll see Nancy yourself to-morrow."

"Not to-morrow, dearie, to-morrow I'll be stepping westward. Good-night, my children. I love you." He kissed Janet and held Theodore's hand in a close, firm clasp.

"Your father is the most saintly and the most satisfactory man I ever knew," said Theodore as they turned out the lights and went to their room.

It was not to be stepping westward to-morrow for David Ward. In the morning he did not come to breakfast. After a time some one went to call him, but he did not answer. When at last they opened the door, he was not, for God had taken him. Falling asleep sweetly and wakening in the city where, when comes the pilgrim home, all the bells are rung for joy.

Good-bye, Mr. Greatheart! Janet grieved, but her grief was soothed by the knowledge that her dear father had gone swiftly and painlessly into the home

that is not very far off. She is faring onward still, making earth a brighter place for all who meet her, and seeking to do her Master's will till "that day break and all the shadows flee away."

One of her chief difficulties and one that roused her from the apathy into which she sank, when she first had to live without her father, sprang from an apparent clash of duties. Janet was anxious to be a perfect wife, to be a faithful mother, and to do all she could in the parish.

But what of her talent, that God had given her as a portion of her endowment? Was it to be laid up in a napkin? Was she to let it rust, to lose her power to reach souls by her pen, to lose her place in the ranks? Her husband put no obstacle in her way, but she soon realized that while his study hours were never interrupted when he chose to be alone, hers were at the mercy of everybody. The servants came with teasing questions. Though she managed ever so carefully, Bridget would remember that the grocer's list had not been complete, or come to complain that the butcher had sent a tough steak. The New York manse was as hospitable as her father's had been. Company came and went. Janet tried the plan of having a day at home, but the congregation did not like that and called whenever they pleased. Mr. Fuller objected to her rising very early, or sitting up very late for literary work. And the papers kept on sending her orders.

Before very long, she proved that the old aphorism is true, that duties do not conflict. She learned to write in the between times, with a child building a block house or learning a lesson at her feet; she

learned to side-track her work and go back to it without disturbance. Her brain was capable of carrying on two sets of ideas at a time. She could weave a fairy-tale and mend a child's frock at the same moment. She could placate a troubled youth who had not been elected to a coveted office in the Christian Endeavor and arrange a plot for her new book, and this without any jostling. When she grew very tired, she picked the children up, left Theodore to plod on awhile alone, and sought refuge with Stuart in the hills of Tennessee.

A woman in these days must be many-sided. Janet kept her sympathies alive by contact with many different kinds of people. When she sat in the mountain cabins, she felt near God, but so she had often felt in New York drawing-rooms.

One day, as she was writing at Stuart's table, in the study, once her dear father's, she was called by her brother.

"Here's an old friend, sister."

She recognized in the straight old figure, the head thrown a little back, the blue cotton gown and calf-skin shoes, Tim Nelson's mother. The old woman had tied her horse at the gate; she had taken off her sunbonnet and was holding it by the strings.

"I heard tell you were here, honey, and I rode over to see your father's daughter once more. It does me good to look at you, Mrs. Fuller. You've grown like Mr. Ward. I've been somewhere else too, honey."

"I know you have. Belle told me so. You've been visiting her and the children."

"Yes, honey, I have. Donald and Janet are splen-

did children. Belle's a lady. She made me very welcome. But I couldn't stay long. I couldn't breathe among the houses. They close in too tightly. I reckon, don't you, the mansions in heaven will have pines around them, and roomy lots. You don't s'pose they're built in rows, do you, dearie?"

"No, dear Mrs. Nelson. I think we'll find just exactly what each of us loves best, when we get there. Jesus said that He would prepare a place for us, and the place of His preparing would surely suit us."

"And you think we'll know one another there?"

"Certainly. It wouldn't be heaven if we were all strangers."

As Mrs. Nelson rode away, Stuart came back with the mail. There was a sheaf of letters for Janet, but she read Theodore's first, and Nancy's next. And Nancy's had a genuine surprise for her. Since she had been Nancy Wiburn only by adoption and had known herself entitled to another name by birth, Janet's friend had been more social, less morbid than before. It was news to Janet that she was to marry and become the wife of a certain Max Kincaid, an artist of increasing reputation.

"Well," she mused, "except Miss Prescott, all of us who have been intimate friends have married or will marry. Yet people declare that college women shun matrimony. It isn't true."

She had spoken aloud. Stuart heard her. "No, sister," he said, "it isn't true, and it would be a pity if it were, since college women make the best wives in the world. At least so I believe."

XXII

TWO AGAINST THE WORLD

STUART'S remark was so emphatic that it rather surprised his listeners, but it was illuminated for them shortly afterwards when his engagement to a younger sister of Mrs. Philip Evans was announced. The Maurices were not near neighbors in the town sense of the word, but a gallop across country was nothing where people of adjacent counties foregathered on social occasions, and the railway too, had made it a matter of ease to visit the Maurices. Phil and Barbara were in Bombay, but the lines of communication between them and the old home were in frequent use, and India did not seem very far off to the parents who heard from their daughter by every steamer. It was at a missionary rally where Stuart had spoken that he had fallen in love with the girl who was now his betrothed, meeting her as if for the first time, when she was wearing the honors of her graduation. As a child he had known her, but it was with a young man's indifference to a little lass in a ruffled frock and apron. So that Gladys had taken his heart by storm with her beauty and her brightness, and before he knew it he was hers for life.

Janet was more than pleased. She had longed to see the old manse something more than a bachelor's home, and Gladys was Barbara over again. It was

a satisfaction to her that a girl her mother would have loved, should sit in her old place at the table, and carry forward the plans that had been dear to her gentle mother. Agnes could be trusted.

The twins were always so happy and free in the mountains that she dreaded taking them home to the confinement of their New York household. Walks in the park and decorous play in the street could not make up for the unrestraint of the children who when at Uncle Stuart's were allowed to romp and range with the utmost liberty. But a wife cannot indulge in long absences from home, and Janet counted the days jealously when she was away. She never felt quite contented except in her own house.

When Theodore and Janet had united their fortunes, it was his duty still to provide largely for the support of his mother and sister. His ample salary as pastor of an up-town church had enabled him to do this, and Janet's pen brought so generous an addition to their annual income that there had been no strain. His mother had passed away a year ago, and his invalid sister had since then been an inmate of a sanitarium. The first rift in the cloudless sky of the Fullers' life came when Miss Isadore Fuller, wearying of the sanitarium, expressed her intention to come and live with her brother.

A home is ideal only as it is the home of a single family. No household is equipped for tranquil living when an outsider enters its doors. Janet held strong opinions on this point and she resisted with all her might, the permanent introduction of Miss Fuller, as a member of the family. Theodore was not entirely

in sympathy with her. He had a brother's chivalrous devotion to an ailing sister, many years older than himself, who was as he stated over and over, in the domestic discussions which grew frequent, "a lovely Christian woman."

"I don't object to Isa's making us a short visit, Theodore; that would be a pleasure to us all. But I am aware that a visit is not in her mind. She desires a home, and plainly states that she means it to be with you. I am a busy woman, you are a busy man, and we have little children. Isa is an invalid and accustomed to taking her own way. She doubtless has many little ways that must be taken into account. The truth is that I couldn't cater to her, and we should lose the crowning charm of our home in having a third person constantly here. I dislike to be so ungracious but I do not want your sister here in our dear home."

"What then do you suggest?" said Theodore coldly. More than most men, which is saying a good deal, he deprecated contradiction. Unconsciously he was always something of an autocrat, and when he had expressed a wish, he liked it to be fulfilled. Janet was often a little amused at his impatience with dictation when he was so very fond of being a dictator, with his irritability at being opposed in an argument, as though the other side had not its equal right to be heard. But she was not amused when he rose with an air of offense, and looking at his watch, said he must go to his study, before she had had time to answer him.

"My dear husband," she looked at him smilingly as she spoke, "let the study wait. Surely we may

finish our talk like two reasonable beings. You dearly love Isadore, and I love you because you do; I think she and I will love one another if we don't have to live together. Believe me, it is not well to bring an exacting middle-aged lady, who is also a sufferer from nerves, into a home like yours and mine, where so much is going on and where there are children. I would engage a pleasant little apartment for your sister very near us, and provide her with a maid, and if necessary with a nurse. She would thus be independent, and you could see her every day. She might spend her Sundays here."

"I cannot afford so much expense, Janet, and you know it. Besides that is not what Isadore wants. She is very lonely. Since mother died she has been desolate. She longs for brotherly and sisterly companionship and you would put her off with a nurse and a maid. That, pardon me, dear, is giving her a stone when she asks for bread."

Janet was silent. A feeling of delicacy restrained her from saying that the expense would not be an element to consider. Her own income was constantly increasing, and she had no fear on the score of money. And though it costs tremendously to live in a city like New York and the pastor of a flourishing church, however liberally paid, has expenses far beyond the ken of his congregation, expenses for books, for periodicals, for charity, for the regular demands of his denomination, so that often he is proportionally the largest giver in the parish, yet Janet was sure that Theodore could carry out her wish if he would only consent to do so. She knew that the moment to gain this was not auspicious. A certain set of the

masculine jaw, a certain firmness of the mouth, warns a wife when further argument is useless, for the time being, so Janet dropped the matter.

"Never mind dear," she said, "I am wrong to detain you. Don't be troubled. We're not going to quarrel about anything; we never have, you know. This affair will settle itself somehow, I am sure."

"Yes, Janet, we both wish, I am sure, only to obey God's will in the matter."

At this Janet lost her temper. "Indeed I am not sure," she answered vehemently, "you are not called upon to take that tone. What you want is to have me obey your will. Don't deceive yourself, Theodore."

He gave her a most reproachful look and withdrew. For her part she sat down at her desk, and tried to write, and found that to do so was impossible. She was not in the right frame. Whether to run upstairs and concede everything and make her peace with Theodore by begging pardon for her last disrespectful remark, or to await his repentance, and give him her forgiveness when he asked it, she did not know. What she did know was that while there was friction between them, neither husband nor wife could accomplish much. They were not used to small disputes, and they were too truly comrades on the road to treat each other with scant courtesy. Both Janet and her husband practiced politeness in their ordinary intercourse. Politeness is a stronger shield to happiness than some families know. It is exceedingly impolite to quarrel, and ladies and gentlemen cannot stoop to anything so ill-bred.

Janet closed her desk in the morning room where

they had been talking and went to her own room to change her dress, as she had a hospital board meeting that day. She was putting on her bonnet when her husband's low knock, the one that always preceded his entrance, sounded at her door.

"Come in, dear," she called.

He crossed the room and took her in his arms. "Please, Janet," he said, "do precisely as you like. I am all wrong, headstrong and selfish. It is you who are the home queen, and I am ashamed that I ever question your decisions."

It was her turn to be sorry, and she said so. They separated to go on their respective rounds with peace between them. That night they decided to let Isadore know that they would establish her close by them, but that they preferred to keep their home intact. And the next day, they went together to select an apartment, coming home with the refusal of three.

As they entered their door in the twilight, little Emily came running to meet them. "Aunt Isadore is here, mother!" she said.

The matter had settled itself. Isadore had arrived, and for the moment, must be made welcome. When the plan for her separate home was unfolded, she simply declined it once for all.

Isadore Fuller was forty-five years old. The gentlest of human beings in manner, with a voice never raised above a low even tone, with a countenance on which years of nervous prostration had not written a line, she was still the most obstinate of women. Hers was the stubbornness of inertia. She allowed one to talk, to suggest, to direct, to intimate, but she op-

posed whatever did not fall in with her own wishes, with a languid and amiable apathy which nothing could overcome. The knowledge of this trait, or habit, had been in Theodore's mind, when he had so resolutely endeavored to accept her as an inmate of the home. He knew, and he knew that Isadore knew, that if she resolved to come, come she would. Janet might have spared her breath.

Marrying would be a much less complex affair than it is if there were no problem of relations-in-law to solve. Adam and Eve had nobody but themselves to consult, and for them life's adjustments were easy. In our modern days, a girl and a man meet, are mutually attracted, and finally are wedded. They take small heed to the fact that on both sides there are kindred whose peculiarities will have much to do with making their future pathway smooth or rough. Each has a family in the background who are more or less to be reckoned with in the future before the home-making is satisfactorily accomplished. Because he is more in the world and less in the home a husband often succeeds far better with his wife's relations, than she with his, but as a rule, if there are to be peace and reciprocal esteem, and growing affection between the married pair and the relatives of each on both sides, they would better dwell apart. Too much intimate acquaintanceship is a mistake.

Day followed day. Isadore was in possession of Janet's finest guest-chamber, with its dainty belongings, its luxurious bed, its beautiful ornaments, and of the little dressing room attached. In the years of her invalidism she had become extremely high-church in her views and practices, and she regarded the ways

of the Presbyterian household of her brother with no little criticism. One of the first things she did was to fit up a corner of the room for her devotions. She took down, and ordered the maid to set outside her door, a very exquisite flower-piece which had been one of Nancy Wiburn's wedding presents to Janet.

Where it had hung, she arranged a crimson drape in heavy folds, and against this she set an ivory crucifix in bold relief. Her pious books, manuals, hymnals, and other works which she daily read, she placed on a shelf under the crucifix, and beneath this was her prayer-cushion.

"How impertinent," thought Janet as she picked up the discarded picture and carried it away to her own chamber.

"Probably these symbols are a comfort to her," said Theodore, indulgently, when he heard of the corner sanctuary. "They can do her no harm. I am not in sympathy with Isadore's views, but I hope I am broad enough not to be annoyed by them. Remember how much she has had to suffer, Janet."

In these days Janet was learning the beautiful grace of silence. Privately she was arriving at the conclusion that a good deal of Isadore's invalidism was imaginary, and she had less patience with it than before it had come under her notice every day. She observed that while Isadore frequently wished meals served in her room, she always ate with good appetite, and she also saw that when there was agreeable company at the dinner table, Isadore was always strong enough to be counted upon. Janet had to pray more than ever in her life, for strength to endure daily pin-pricks. She bore herself so

serenely that her dearest friends did not dream how tired she was growing.

"If Isadore really means to stay on indefinitely," Janet said one day to Elizabeth Evans who was visiting in town and had dropped in for afternoon tea, "I may as well accept the situation. I shall not let the matter make disturbance between Theodore and me. Our love must endure the test."

"Wasn't it queer," laughed Elizabeth, "that the Fullers should have named two children so nearly alike, Isadore and Theodore, for euphony, I presume?"

"Now don't be frivolous, dear. Presently you'll have to go up-stairs and see her. I have discovered that she is very much disturbed if she is left out of anything, and when my friends come, they must either go and see her or else she must come and see them. This is one of her bad days, so you must go up. Just a few minutes before you leave."

"Pray, how does she know that I am here? In a home like this, where so many are coming, how does the dear lady discriminate between those who come for the minister, and those who come that they may see your sweet self? It puzzles me, Janet."

"It did puzzle me, but she has very acute hearing, and her door is always ajar. That is a thing I can bear. The thing I can't bear patiently is her crossness with the children. She has no toleration for either of them. One would fancy that I might be trusted to look after their manners, but no! Aunt Isadore nags from morning till night. They laugh too loudly, they run through the house, they are not marvels of implicit obedience, they forget that their father is a minister. They vex Aunt Isadore.

“ ‘Poor Theodore,’ she said the other day, ‘what a pity he married a literary woman. Janet, you do your best I suppose, but your work does monopolize you, more than you think. You neglect Theodore and the children!’ ”

“Poor Theodore, indeed!” ejaculated Elizabeth. “Poor Janet rather! Well, you must cultivate a habit of regarding the humorous aspect of the case. It has a very funny side. Here is a woman, dependent on your goodness for her home, here in it without your consent, and likely here to stay, who is critical, who interferes, and who is too obtuse to see herself in a false position. Janet, look at it as simply droll, and whenever it is too much for you, run away for awhile; run away to Stuart in Tennessee and let the peace of the mountains fold you closely about, or slip up country to me at Dene’s Mills. No, I’ll see Miss Fuller another time, dear. I must hurry home now.”

Occasionally in this strange world of ours it happens that a bigger trouble comes along and blunts the edge of several smaller ones. When Janet looked only at the vexation of her sister-in-law’s constant presence in the manse, it seemed a big enough annoyance to blot out the sunshine, but when she rose above it, and lived above it, the atmosphere grew clearer.

In these days, Janet went back to her girlhood’s habit of taking everything, however small, to her heavenly Father. She had insensibly drifted out from the simplicity of the manse training, and though she never omitted the form of devotion, she had allowed herself to grow hurried. There was sure to

be so much to do. As in the days of pressure when in the freshman class at Lucas, she had for awhile abbreviated her silent time, she had gradually as a minister's wife, cumbered with a thousand cares, forgotten to take her regular morning and evening hours for sitting at the Master's feet. She returned to the old position of Marcus Antoninus, "Everywhere and at all times it is in thy power piously to acquiesce in thy present condition and to behave justly to those about thee." As Janet resumed prayer she grew quieter, she grew more resigned; she learned to make the best and not the worst of the position which had been forced upon her. To live with the uncongenial is hard, but it is not the hardest thing in life. To live with the uncongenial and rebel against the situation is infinitely harder. One day she found this quotation in a little book which she liked to keep near her hand,

"Every relation to mankind of hate or scorn or neglect, is full of vexation and torment. There is nothing to do with men but to love them; to contemplate their virtues with admiration, their faults with pity and forbearance, and their injuries with forgiveness. Task all the ingenuity of your mind to devise some other thing but you never can find it. To hate your adversary will not help you; to kill him will not help you; nothing within the compass of the universe can help you, but to love him. How many a knot of mystery and misunderstanding would be untied by one word spoken in simple and confiding truth of heart! How many a solitary place would be made glad if love were there; and how many a dark dwelling would be filled with light!"

"That is what I must do," she exclaimed, "I must love Isadore. I have been merely tolerating her. Father would never have done that. Why, I remember his sweetness to those who offended him; I have been putting myself first."

The children, fresh and rosy from a walk, came for their hour of mother-talk, and mother was so gentle and loving that they both felt the new influence. When they had finished their tea in the nursery and had had their frolic and said their prayers, Janet kissed and hugged them, and then went without solicitation to sit awhile with Isadore.

"If it be ever so hard to love her, I must try to do it, with God's help," she said.

The effort was hard, for Isadore was as a rule ungracious. Her life from the beginning had been to her a disappointment, her attitude to people in general was that of antagonism or distrust, and her world was a very narrow one. She cared a good deal for her brother; very little for her brother's wife. In fact, she had never ceased to feel jealous of Janet, for she imagined her to have robbed her of the highest place in her brother's affections. So, it was not much satisfaction to either that accrued from Janet's endeavors to make Isadore happier. But Janet kept on praying for her, a very wise thing to do. When we carry our burdens to God, we may well leave them with Him. He will enable us to bear them, or will bear them for us.

The larger trouble was to make the smaller one light by comparison. The newly revived habit of prayer was a preparation to Janet for a complication which came upon her as a great surprise.

Churches in the twentieth century are as the tabernacle of old, in the wilderness pilgrimage of the Hebrews. They are the habitations of the Divine Name. They conserve the best life of the community. But they are also imperfect human institutions, and one feature of their imperfection is found in the rivalry between adjoining congregations. Far too often the commercial test is brought to bear upon the success or non-success of a minister. As I once heard a good deacon say, speaking according to his light, "If the minister can secure the income, we will do the rest."

The church to which Mr. Fuller ministered had never been popular though occasionally there had been a crowd. For years it had held a substantial and very conservative constituency. Solid men attended it, paid their pew rent regularly, and gave large contributions to the causes which at intervals were presented by the denomination. The auditorium was well filled at the morning service but pews were sometimes empty. Few strangers came to take the places of those members, who, removing farther up-town, still paid for their pews and sittings, but ceased to give their personal presence. Men and women are gregarious. They prefer to worship in a large congregation to sitting in one where the listeners are few. It began to be said, in that accent of faint praise which is fatal to a pastor's influence, that Mr. Fuller was a charming man, delightful to meet socially, a thorough gentleman, but not a strong preacher, or that Mr. Fuller preached finely but was too mystical or too spiritual or too profound, and was deficient in the social equipment. Both charges

were untrue, and arose from the dissatisfaction of those who made them. They were the more freely made that a new pastor who had recently been called to a neighboring church was sweeping the church-going people into his fold in great numbers, and attracting many non-church-goers.

With the sensitiveness of a minister's wife, who as a minister's daughter, had lived through a similar situation before, Janet saw this in its fullness, before Theodore did. Or, she thought she did. She observed, however, that he was seeking more than his wont to give his sermons picturesque titles, and to fuse the dramatic into his style, which was colloquial and persuasive rather than sensational. And he was inclined more than formerly to yield to the aggressions of the choir. He was as always indefatigable in visiting the sick, and those in bereavement turned to him for consolation and were never sent empty away. And too, he devoted more time than ever to the work at the Mission, where his young assistant was breaking the bread of life to the needy.

Janet was walking home with her husband from prayer-meeting one Wednesday evening. The meeting had been of the usual type. Only the faithful few who were always to be expected were present, and after the opening exercises and the pastor's remarks, long and embarrassing pauses had followed, broken by hymns, or by reluctant addresses to the throne. The two walked on in silence, after a parishioner or so, keeping them company to their own corners, had said good-night.

"Nevertheless, Theodore!" said Janet, as if taking up a conversation that had been interrupted and sim-

ply following out her own train of thought, "nevertheless, I am a good deal uplifted by having gone to prayer-meeting. The dullest prayer-meeting I ever attended, not that this is it, has done me great good. It gives one a chance for communion with God."

They were on a dark side street, a short cut to their home. Janet's hand was on Theodore's arm. He reached out his other hand and gave it a little squeeze.

"You are a champion comforter, little wife!" he said. "You remind me of my old Aunt Almira in Connecticut. She said to me once in a burst of confidence, that she had heard folk say they were too tired to go to church; for her part it was the only place she ever went where she could sit still and fold her hands and rest."

"Your Aunt Almira in Connecticut," said Janet, "must be a myth. I never heard of her before."

"She was no myth. When I was a little chap I used to go and spend summer vacations with her on the farm. They sent me there from Tennessee the year after I had scarlet fever. She died long ago, and she was the last survivor of our Connecticut kin, and I haven't thought of her for years."

"Well, I didn't mean my remark about prayer-meetings in her sense, dearest. Theodore, we've happened to settle most of our important affairs in life, on New York streets. Suppose we don't go home just yet. It's early. Stop that Columbus Avenue car, and let's go 'way up-town, and then step out and have an old-fashioned walk and talk."

Theodore hailed a passing car, and they were whirled in a quarter of an hour, to a realm entirely

foreign to their usual beat. There they did as Janet had proposed, walked and talked.

"You see, my love," said the wife, "I am not blind. I have noticed that the congregation is not increasing. That I have not cared for. Your preaching has been blessed, people have been converted, a good deal of excellent work has been done. What I have not liked has been to see you trying to adopt methods not your own. You do not know it, dear, but you are less a preacher than an essayist just now. You are letting go of the simple Bible. People need to study the Bible. To a good many of them it is a very unfamiliar book indeed."

She paused for breath.

"Janet," asked Theodore quietly, "did you know that there has been a cut in my salary?"

This was news. He had not told her, and she had not divined it, but she manifested no astonishment. Why should she? Reductions in salary are obviously businesslike and therefore to be expected if congregations fall off. That the church has still a very respectable amount of wealth in its ranks, does not enter into the case.

"No, dear," said Janet, "I didn't know. Why did you not tell me?"

"I hadn't the courage. It seemed so like the first note of failure. Failure should not come to so young a man as I am, Janet. It's too humiliating."

"I've heard you say, sir," she answered archly, "that nothing is humiliating which God appoints, and that failure can come to no man who is living within the will of God."

"Yes, that I have said, and that I believe."

"Then if you've been doing your whole duty with both hands, failure cannot be attributed to you. What I wish, dearest, is that you may be strong enough to preach precisely as you always have, if possible more faithfully than ever, but along the old ways of the pure gospel. I can't bear my husband to attempt sensationalism. Never mind a little ebb-tide in adherents. It may precede a flood-tide. Never mind the lessened income. We have enough for our needs. Why, Theodore, in all my girlish life I never dreamed of having the money you and I have now."

"There are the children to be educated."

"One day at a time, Theodore."

"There is Isadore. Her expenses do not diminish. It may reach a point when I could not support my sister outside my own home, and I've always felt that if she grew too great a tax for your wonderful strength and sweetness, Janet, I *could* make some other arrangement."

"Don't think of Isadore. I am contented to have her stay. I am finding out her lovable phases, dear. She is better in our care, than she could be with strangers, and I see now that to put her in a house of her own, would be cruel."

They were passing under an electric light. Theodore turned and gazed, in the deserted street, with deep admiration into the face of his wife.

"Janet," he said, "you are simply the most incomparable wife man ever had. You are the dearest and best of comforters."

"It is amusing," she answered, "that you and I are always making love to one another on the street."

"Well, dear," he said, earnestly, "I feel stronger for our talk. I'll try to do the Lord's work with the weapons He has put in my hands. Whatever be the issue of this apparent falling off I am still the pastor of our dear church and am bound to do a pastor's duty here, a day's work at a time. And we are, thank heaven, two against the world."

"Two who are one," said Janet, "and Christ is our own to help us."

Before Janet slept that night, she rummaged in her scrap-books and found a poem her mother had liked. She laid it on Theodore's desk where his eye should fall on it in the morning.

TRUST FOR THE DAY.

Because in a day of my days to come
There waiteth a grief to be,
Shall my heart grow faint, and my lips be dumb,
In this day that is bright for me?

Because of a subtle sense of pain,
Like a pulse-beat, threaded through
The bliss of my thought, shall I dare refrain
From delight in the pure and true?

In the harvest-field shall I cease to glean,
Since the bloom of the Spring has fled?
Shall I veil mine eyes to the noonday sheen,
Since the dew of the morn hath sped?

Nay, phantom ill with the warning hand,
Nay, ghosts of the weary past,—
Serene, as in armor of faith, I stand;
Ye may not hold me fast.

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Your shadows across my sun may fall,
But as bright the sun shall shine ;
For I walk in a light ye cannot pall,
The light of the King divine.

And whatever He sends from day to day,
I am sure that His name is Love ;
And He never will let me lose my way
To my rest in His home above.

Every Christian knows that there are crises in which the only thing possible is to trust, not seeing much of the onward path, but living and clinging and doing one's best. And when these crises come, the child of the divine Father can say, out of rich experience, that it is better "to walk with God in the dark, than to walk alone in the light."

Janet's brothers, grown up now, and in the thick of life's conflicts, were great helps to her with their cheery optimism and resolute courage. Stuart wrote the most encouraging letters, bubbling over with fun and hope. The manse, she saw, was what it always had been, a refuge for every one who was in need of a shelter. One day Dr. Huntton, tearing himself from his patients, and leaving the mountains for a glimpse of the world-life he had seen little of in his busy career, appeared at Janet's door, carpet-bag in hand. It was literally a carpet-bag, and the trim maid, seeing a shaggy, unkempt old gentleman, in an antiquated beaver hat and an old-fashioned coat, hesitated about admitting him, but Janet knew the voice and came flying down to meet him, giving him the welcome due her old friend and her father's. He went to Theodore's church, and was outspoken

in his liking for the service, though flowers on the pulpit were to his eye, a needless frivolity, and he could have spared the splendors of the organ, and was openly disturbed at the prolonged Amens of the choir. They were superfluous to Dr. Huntoon.

XXIII

I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT

THEODORE FULLER was not beaten in the struggle to maintain his end in the part of the field where the Master had set him to work. After his confidential talk with Janet he sat down and seriously reviewed the last year. "A prudent wife is from the Lord," he said seriously, and in the privacy of his study, feeling at the same time some thrusts of conscience because he had not invariably been as considerate of this good gift as he might have been.

The hallucination indulged in by some young people that their first years of wedlock are their happiest is not verified by experience. First years are years of adjustment, and adjustment is seldom painless. As time passes and the two who are faring on together have more and more one heart and one soul between them, they realize the joy of mutual helpfulness and service.

Janet deliberately made her choice in these crucial years. She had her hours of battle, and only the dear Lord whose compassions fail not, knew how severe and prolonged they were. Finally, she renounced not only the wish for literary recognition, for continuing to be a widely sought, widely read and successful author, but she abandoned almost entirely the effort to make money by her pen.

"My first and foremost obligation is to second my husband. I am not merely his wife, I am the wife of a minister. I never appreciated it so much as now. This home is not ours only. It is a manse, a home for the people," she said, as all by herself in the quiet of her little book-room, where she had been accustomed to write, she made her renunciation. She glanced up, and from the wall above her, looked down the benignant face of her father. It seemed to her as if the portrait were alive, so vivid were the eyes, so regnant was the peace on the brow, and in the stillness she could almost hear her father quoting again his favorite verse from St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away."

Janet sent for Nancy to make her a little visit.

"I want you to find for me two or three young girls who need a lift," she said. "I am giving up some of my work, and I would like to help some clever newcomer in getting a foothold. You always have a train of people after you who need a helping hand."

"Yes," Nancy answered, "that's one way that I take to pay the debt I owe to a kind providence for helping me when I was an orphan and kinless. Did you know, Janet, that I have a little niece with me now, that she is staying here under my care, and best of all, she has the same capability for art and for color and form that I have. Well, I will find the girls you want, but Janet, you are not throwing overboard your goods and chattels because you are ill,

are you? I couldn't bear to think of you as breaking down."

"I was never better. I am perfectly well, and only giving up one sort of work that I may take another. By the way, have you seen Barbara Evans' last letter?"

"No, it goes to you first, Janet."

A plan had been agreed upon between Barbara and some of her old friends that she should write to them in turn from Bombay, and that each should pass the letter on to the next in turn.

"Here it is. Tuck it into your pocket, Nancy. Don't read it now. The point I thought of was one that she makes about foreign missionaries that in the great loneliness that comes to them in the far off lands, they more than other men, need wifely companionship. She says, 'I am more than a missionary woman out here. I am Phil Evans' wife and that makes him a better missionary.' Well, New York isn't a whit behind Bombay as a difficult field, and I'm set now on helping my good man over some of his hard places. I haven't been enough of a help-meet to Ted, Nancy."

"Are you saying Ted to that most dignified of gentlemen, Janet? I thought you had abjured nicknames."

"I do in public, Nancy, but in private I use a pet name when I like, and so I'm calling my husband Ted now and then. I don't dare to before Isadore. She disapproves it so."

"She is better, I fancy," said Nancy gravely, "less absorbed in herself, and not so determined to be thought an invalid. Do you know, Janet, that if

Isadore Fuller can be cured of her ennui and her nervousness and her deplorable egotism, she will be a testimony to your good sense and Christian character worth having about? Seriously she is a fine woman spoiled. Now, if she can be changed and become like other people, it will be something to boast of. Mary was saying this only yesterday."

"Don't talk about her, Nancy. I am finding her more of a sister than I ever expected to. I can comprehend at last why Theodore is so fond of her and I was color-blind to that for a long, long time. Here come the children."

Janet took up the rôle of minister's wife in earnest just as her mother had done before her. But she was not handicapped by her mother's tendency to low spirits. Janet's disposition had an even cheerfulness which stood her in stead in every circumstance. She was sunny-tempered and not given to extremes. Part of her discretion was shown in her omission to tell Theodore that she was writing less, but he found her at leisure to walk with him, to listen to his sermons after they were written, and to entertain him when he was tired. They had each been preoccupied, he with his work, she with hers. Now she was somehow oftener ready for him, and in the evening, she fell into a pleasant way of sitting down at the piano and singing familiar airs, playing softly and fitfully, and chatting in the pauses between the songs. Not that they had many domestic evenings. Engagements throng upon a city pastor, and Theodore was no exception. But whenever she had him at home, she made home so cozily restful that he felt its warmth and cheer, and as often as she

could, she went out with him. Though nobody requests or expects this of a city minister's wife, Janet made calls, and she had pleasant little groups of their own people together, and wrote notes inviting this or the other husband and wife, or three or four young men, homeless in boarding houses, to come to dinner at the manse. In short she was playing her old rôle of settlement worker over again, harmonizing, elevating, cheering the people she met, only now the parish was her settlement. She became her husband's fearless critic, telling him frankly what she thought of his sermons, and holding him closely to the simplicity of the gospel.

"Theodore dearest," she said, "everybody is more or less learned to-day. The pulpit is not so much more scholarly than the pew, the men who come to hear you, don't want literature or politics or even patriotism. What they are hungry for is the Bible, the sweet old story told once more. Give them the Word of God, and oh! never mind who is there or who isn't; preach to five as you would to five hundred."

The congregation that had been vanishing came surging back. The vacant pews were filled again. There was no lack of money to carry on the business side, for presently the tale went out that in Mr. Fuller's church one couldn't procure so much as a sitting, and as soon as that was rumored abroad, everybody wanted what was not to be had. Once let a report prevail that pews and sittings anywhere are all taken, and there will be a general rush to the spot, that the already crowded church may be still more congested. This is human nature.

Janet Ward, as a girl, had been peculiarly magnetic. No one had called her a beauty, but her sunny hair, gold in the sunshine, with red coppery glints in its soft meshes, her deep blue eyes, the princess-pose, as the girls had called it, of her pretty head, had been very captivating. As a woman she was more charming than the girl had been. Love had brought her an added grace, an added confidence, while it had taught her to restrain her tendency to over-emphasis. Husbands and wives who belong to one another grow subtly alike. Janet and Theodore were not exceptional. They were in such complete harmony of desire and endeavor, that they grew into a very beautiful resemblance.

Said a romantic little maiden in the congregation,

"If ever I marry, I shall expect my husband to worship me as Mr. Fuller worships his wife."

"Well," said her father, "you will have to take up Mrs. Fuller's rôle and worship him. I have never seen more devotion than she shows, not to him only, but to his work. Why, one rainy Sabbath evening, lately, when Mr. Fuller was exchanging with some one from out of town, I happened to go to church early, to see if everything was as it should be. Our sexton is sometimes a little negligent. Whom should I meet but Mrs. Fuller, emerging from the study. 'What are *you* doing here?' I said. She laughed and explained that she had been a little anxious lest the visiting minister should not find everything comfortable. You heard, didn't you, of her taking her husband's place, one evening, at a meeting in Cooper Union?"

"No," said wife and daughter, the former remark-

ing that she was perfectly capable of making a speech if she chose.

"Well, it was a wildly stormy night, and the doctor said that Mr. Fuller, not yet over the grippe, could not safely go down town, though in a closed carriage, to talk to a big crowd of men, reformed and reforming drunkards and such. You know that one of our minister's fads is rescue work. Mrs. Fuller telephoned to this and that man, but every one was engaged. She could find nobody, so she simply went herself as her husband's substitute."

"How did she succeed, and how did you hear about it?"

"As an elder of the church, I hear about most things, my dear, that our pastor and his family do. A person who was present told me, if you must know. Well, my Lady Janet came out on the platform, as much at her ease as if in her own drawing-room, and just talked to those men, as if they had been a crowd of her Sunday-school boys. She did not seem impressed by their poverty, or their sins, or their temptations, so much as by the great longing she had to tell them how Christ loved them, and Mr. Fuller could have done no better, had he been there. No wonder he's so proud of her, an all-round woman like that."

"What are you weaving to-day, dear?" Theodore was saying at that minute to Janet in her own little book-room, where he went every afternoon for a cup of tea at five o'clock. They had fallen into a habit of reserving a half hour for themselves then, if they could. Janet rose from her desk as he came in at the door, and he saw the far-away look in her eyes,

the look that always told that she was out of herself and busy with her dreams.

"I am so glad that you are writing again. You are doing so little in these days."

"Because I've had other things to do, dear." He took the slips of paper she handed him and read aloud the stanzas thereon.

"In a dream I seemed to stand
Close by the gate of Prayer,
And to and fro in the shining land
Went the angels strong and fair.
I heard the sound of their feet,
I heard their wings sweep by,
And the silver tones of their voices sweet
Stirred all the kindling sky.

"Some, as they came, were glad,
A jubilant victor train ;
Some, they had faces stern and sad,
The angels these, of pain ;
And some bore wearily back,
As if earthly sorrow's pall,
Could almost shadow the sunlit track
Where the angel footsteps fall.

"And I saw that all the host
Paused just within the door,
Where the glory of the Holy Ghost
Abides forevermore.
And there was a Face I knew,
A Face so grave, so sweet ;
And ever the prayers of the world came through
The gate, that Face to meet.

"Rapt was the Face of Christ,
By the golden gate of Prayer,
As He watched for the souls whose weary tryst
Made mournful murmur there.

Yet oh ! but His look was still,
And His smile to my heart was balm,
As over the earth with its seething ill
He gazed in heavenly calm.

“Then low to the angel throng
He spoke and forth they sped ;
‘Go hence with the lilt of a sweeter song
To the happy hearts,’ He said.
‘But these who seek my grace
With steps that have missed the way
Myself shall bring to a quiet place
In the dark and cloudy day.’

“Oh, not in a dream I kneel
To-day by the gate of Prayer.
And deep in my yearning spirit feel
The peace that broodeth there ;
And not in a dream I ask,
‘Dear Lord, whatever it be
Of sorrow, or pain, or daily task
I bear, come Thou to me.’ ”

Theodore laid the stanzas down, and went over to Janet, and kissed her.

“It’s a bit of your heart life, dearest,” he said. But further talk was interrupted, for the children ran clamoring in, full of a visit to the Bronx with Aunt Nancy, whose dark piquante face appeared in the doorway behind them, and an instant later, the group was augmented by Elizabeth Evans who led a fair-haired toddler by the hand.

“I suppose you have heard the news,” said the latter.

“We never hear news,” Janet answered. “We live in our parish.”

"So you do, but don't you read the papers? Nancy's last picture has taken the prize, the first prize if you please, at the Paris Exhibition. I am so puffed up on account of it, that I might have painted it myself. She doesn't appear to mind. The more honors Nancy wins, the more exacting she becomes with herself."

"Yes, I cried over my work to-day before I came over here and stole these blessed children," said Nancy.

"Tears from the depth of some divine despair," quoted Elizabeth. "Oh, Janet, you've been writing again. Show it to me. It looks like verse."

But Janet slipped her manuscript into a drawer of her desk, and gave her friends some tea.

"This isn't all my news," proceeded Elizabeth. "I've heard from Belle Nelson. She's coming here to live if you please."

"To live! Belle! I am surprised!" Janet put down the little silver tea-ball, and waited further explanations.

"Belle is going to be married. Listen. She is the betrothed wife of a judge of the Supreme Court. He is a widower with one young daughter. Belle has two children. My knowledge of Belle leads me to a positive assurance that she will be as happy as she deserves to be."

"Since you girls have pitched upon that congenial and inexhaustible theme," announced Theodore, "I will go to my study. The masculine element is unnecessary to your happiness."

"Good-bye," they called after him, as he disappeared through the portière.

They settled down into a comfortable and cozy chat when he had gone, for they so truly loved Belle Nelson that anything which affected her welfare was very interesting to them all. The children went to the nursery. In the middle of their talk, Miss Isadore Fuller, who seldom joined Janet's friends unless sent for, and who was still as resolute as ever in her wish to *be* sent for, quietly entered the room. It was a small place at any time, and Janet had chosen it for a nook rather than for the entertainment of guests. They sat closer together on the divan to make room for Miss Isadore.

"I heard your voices," said the lady, "and came down to say that I am going away, and I thought I'd tell you first."

"And you haven't told Theodore or me?" exclaimed Janet, much astonished.

"For the very good reason, Janet, that my plans were not made till an hour ago. I have only known it myself since the postman stopped for the last delivery. I must explain, ladies, that I have never been reconciled to living in my brother's household." Janet's eyes were round with surprise, but she speedily repressed both look and speech. "The semi-annual visitations of Janet's aged aunts have always been a trial to me, they are such pronounced old ladies, and so ready to misunderstand an invalid, and Janet's children are very noisy and self-willed. I have had a great deal to bear, and no doubt I have been something of a trial to my sister; my brother has not refrained from saying so at times, with delicacy of course. But my lack of fortune has been a drawback to freedom of movement. Now all is

changed. The letter I hold in my hand is an invitation from my Cousin Maria in Geneva, to join her there, and stay the rest of my life if I choose. She sends me an ample remittance, and will give me an allowance suitable to her dignity and my own. Maria and I were like sisters in our youth. She and I are both alone, and blood is thicker than water."

Tears obscured Janet's vision. "Oh, Isadore, have I been so unkind? I have not meant to be."

There was an instant's unveiling of Isadore's better self.

"Indeed, Janet, you have been very good, and I have been enough to vex even the saint you are. I shall always speak well of you, and I am going to make reparation for the trouble I've given by leaving you free to enjoy your home."

She went away with a step so light and quick that the three women looked at one another as if spell-bound. Isadore, who had seemed incapable of anything but a dragging inability to move at a pace faster than a snail's, changed like this!

Janet spoke first.

"Girls, I am sure she is going to be well! She has been mind-sick rather than body-sick for years, and I've not been as patient as I should have been. Father would have told me so, I am sure."

"Now, don't go to raking up straws to make yourself remorseful, Janet Ward." Elizabeth was standing up, her little lad was tugging at her gown; he at least was tired of the call. "You have done the best you could as strength was given you, and a living trial is always harder to bear than grief over a bereavement. Isadore Fuller is a good woman, but

good women may sometimes be so difficult to understand that one would find their opposites rather a rest." Then Elizabeth went away.

"When the Lord wants to make a woman specially lovable and lovely," said Nancy musingly, "He takes great pains with her, and sometimes He cultivates her finest qualities of character, by setting her down in a home, with some very fretful, uncongenial person, who is a means of grace. You are all the dearer, my Janet, that you have learned to bear and forbear, in the years you have spent in enduring the foibles and tempers of Isadore."

"She is going just as I had been learning to love her."

"You will love her none the less when the ocean rolls between you, and you don't have to study her moods and caprices every day. I think the dear Father has said of you, 'Here endeth the first lesson.' Never mind, dear. When the page turns, you'll have another task set for you, do not fear. Then," dropping her serious tone for a lighter one, she finished by saying, "when Miss Isadore has departed, I'll come round and help you refurnish your guest-chamber. I have a lot of properties about me that I want to bestow upon you, because they clutter up our apartment and are in the way."

Whatever philosophy one may bring to bear upon it, a haircloth shirt next the skin is irritating and its absence is a relief. Janet was amazed at herself, she so thoroughly enjoyed her home when she had it again without any regular inmate besides her husband and children. The servants were pleased too. Miss Isadore had never been able to keep maids

in good temper. They had resented her frequent calls upon them for extra service, and below stairs the comments upon her had been far from flattering. The old aunties when they came to visit, openly rejoiced, and come they did until extreme old age. Aunt Katharine and Aunt Jessamy were perennials.

"Theodore dear," said Janet one day, when she had returned from seeing the two old ladies off for their home, "I'm going to leave you and the little ones awhile."

"Whither now, sweetheart?"

"I'm not going South, I'm not going East or West, very far. There was a girl I used to know, named Janet Ward. I'm losing her in the distractions of the day and I'm bent on finding her again. If you don't mind very much, I'll take a train for Springdale, some morning soon, find an upper room in somebody's house there where I may fold my wings a little while and rest, and call on some of the old people whom I knew when I was a girl and some of the middle-aged ones who were young when I was."

"You are still young, Janet. Why mention middle age? You are to me a girl."

"I understand you dear. There are moods when I am eighteen; there are other moods when I might be eighty. As the years go, I am young of course, but I'm just a little worn out with belonging to so many people. I won't stay away long, dear, but I want to flit to Springdale and find the old Janet Ward again, and I'd rather go quite by myself."

And she did. Mr. Leland was there, and numbers of those she remembered, for people lived long in Springdale. She stayed a fortnight; she did absolutely

nothing but read and rest and sleep. When she returned and her husband met her at the station, he said most cheerily,

"I see that you found her. Good-morning, Janet Ward. You haven't changed the very least bit."

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